JOE GOLEM OCCULT DETECTIVE™

THE RAT CATCHER *and* THE SUNKEN DEAD

CHILLING TALES OF SUPERNATURAL HORROR!

by MIKE MIGNOLA
CHRISTOPHER GOLDEN
PATRIC REYNOLDS
DAVE STEWART

FORTY YEARS

after disaster left Lower Manhattan submerged in thirty feet of water, the Drowning City has taken a turn for the weird, and Joe Golem is there to investigate. A mysterious and terrifying creature has been snatching children and pulling them into the depths of the canals, and those that drowned in the floods are coming back to the surface—alive.

JOE GOLEM™
OCCULT DETECTIVE

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JOE GOLEM: OCCULT DETECTIVE VOLUME 1—THE RAT CATCHER AND THE SUNKEN DEAD

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THE RAT CATCHER

Part
1

APRIL 17, 1955. BROOKLYN HEIGHTS, NEW YORK.
JUST ACROSS THE RIVER FROM WHAT USED TO BE CALLED LOWER MANHATTAN.
Water Taxi
FOR THE PAST THIRTY YEARS-- SINCE THE EARTH SHOOK, SINCE THE BEDROCK SANK, SINCE THE SEA ROSE--IT'S HAD ANOTHER NAME.
THE DROWNING CITY.

FROM THE JOURNAL OF THE DETECTIVE SIMON CHURCH.
"I HAVE NEVER BEEN PRONE TO FITS OF SENTIMENTALITY, BUT I MUST ADMIT THAT I WAS GLAD FOR THE RAIN TODAY.
"THE GLOOM AND THE LOW-SLUNG CLOUDS, THE BLEACHING GRAY LIGHT...IT FELT AS IF THE SKY ITSELF WERE GRIEVING.
"I WOULD LIKE TO SAY THAT IT HELPED ME PUT MY OWN GRIEF ASIDE, BUT I HAVE NEVER LIED IN THESE PAGES AND DO NOT INTEND TO START TODAY.
"I WILL MISS MORRIS SOWERBERRY, JUST AS I HAVE MISSED THE MEN WHO CAME BEFORE HIM. PERHAPS MORE SO, BECAUSE I HAVE DECIDED HE MUST BE THE LAST.
Vanishing Detective Declared
Sowerberry Funeral Today
"OVER THE DECADES, MY INVESTIGATIONS HAVE SAVED MANY LIVES, BUT IT IS PERILOUS WORK. TOO MANY OF MY ASSOCIATES HAVE MET MISERABLE ENDS.

"AND YET I LIVE. I ENDURE.
CAPITOL
"I AM NOT INCLINED TOWARD SELF-RECRIMINATION OR FLIGHTS OF FANCY, BUT I CANNOT ESCAPE THE CONCLUSION THAT I AM THE COMMON DENOMINATOR IN THESE TRAGEDIES.
"THEREFORE I HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO FOREGO COMPANIONSHIP AND CONTINUE MY WORK ALONE, FROM THIS DAY FORTH.
"I NO LONGER DARE RISK THE LIVES OF OTHERS. I NO LONGER DARE INVITE THE GRIEF THAT ACCOMPANIES THE DEATH OF A FRIEND.
"NO MATTER HOW LONG I LIVE, OR HOW MUCH MAGIC OR HOW MANY MECHANISMS I USE TO EXTEND MY LIFE, IT SEEMS THAT I REMAIN...
CRACK
"...PAINFULLY HUMAN."
DAMN IT.

SKRITCH
THUNK
Hmm?
IMPOSSIBLE.
KRAKKL
KRAK
SHIKT

HOW CAN THIS BE?
THE DROWNING CITY.
SEPTEMBER 2, 1965.

WHERE DID YOU LEARN TO KISS LIKE THAT?
HUSH. I'M IMPROVISING.
SHRIPT
NO!
BAM
VRMMMM
GO! GO! GO!

COME BACK HERE, YOU LITTLE PUNK!
LET'S GO, ALAN! WE CAN STILL CATCH THEM!
VVVVRRMMMMM
THOSE KIDS ARE **WATER RATS.** THEY KNOW THESE CANALS TOO WELL. THERE'S NO WAY--
IF WE CAN JUST SEE WHICH WAY THEY GO--
VVVVRRMM
OW!
"LET HIM"?
HOW COULD YOU LET HIM JUST TAKE IT LIKE THAT?
YEAH! WHAT'D WE SCORE, EDDIE?
I'M LOOKING, I'M LOOKING!
HEADS UP, BOYS. THE BABE'S ROLLIN' IN DOUGH. OR SHE **WAS...**

NOW WE--
AHHH!
EDDIE!
DID YOU SEE IT, PATRICK?
SAW ENOUGH. GET AWAY FROM THE WATER, HECTOR...
OH. OH, MAN. BUT EDDIE...
HE'S GONE, JUST LIKE THEM OTHERS. I FIGURED THEY JUST RUN OFF, BUT NOW...
...I AIN'T STICKIN' AROUND HERE. YOU WANNA GO FOR A SWIM, LOOK AROUND FOR HIM, YOU'RE WELCOME TO STAY BEHIND.
NO, MAN...
...NOT ON YOUR LIFE.

SEPTEMBER 3.
CAPITOL
UNGGHH...
HHRRR...

AIIIIE!
⟨PLEASE, NO! NOT MY BABY!⟩
⟨MOTHERS ALWAYS RUN.⟩
NOOO!
⟨THEY NEVER GET FAR.⟩
HUURRKK
⟨TRANSLATED FROM 15TH-CENTURY SLAVONIAN⟩

SKREEE!
UNGGHH...
KRAK
‹KILL ALL THOSE WHO WOULD DEFY US!›
BONG BONG BONG BONG
WAAAA!
BONG BONG BONG BONG
‹SEE WHAT YOU'VE DONE, PRIEST? IF YOU'D ONLY HELD YOUR TONGUE, MOST OF THEM WOULD STILL BE ALIVE!›

HURRKK
‹KILL HER. GOD HELP ME, YOU MUST KILL THE WITCH.›
‹KILL THE WITCH.›
SPLUTCH
‹KILL THE WITCH.›
‹WHAT HAVE YOU DONE, PRIEST?›
‹WHAT IS THIS CREATURE?›
HSSSS!
BONG
BONG
BONG
BONG

HUMPH!
⟨MAN OF STONE AND CLAY...I WILL RETURN YOU TO THE EARTH.⟩
KRUNCH
⟨KILL THE WITCH.⟩
⟨NEVER MIND HER. IT'S ULRIKA YOU MUST KILL. SHE COMMANDS THEM ALL!⟩
⟨UL...⟩
HRRR!
⟨...RIKA?⟩
WAAAA!

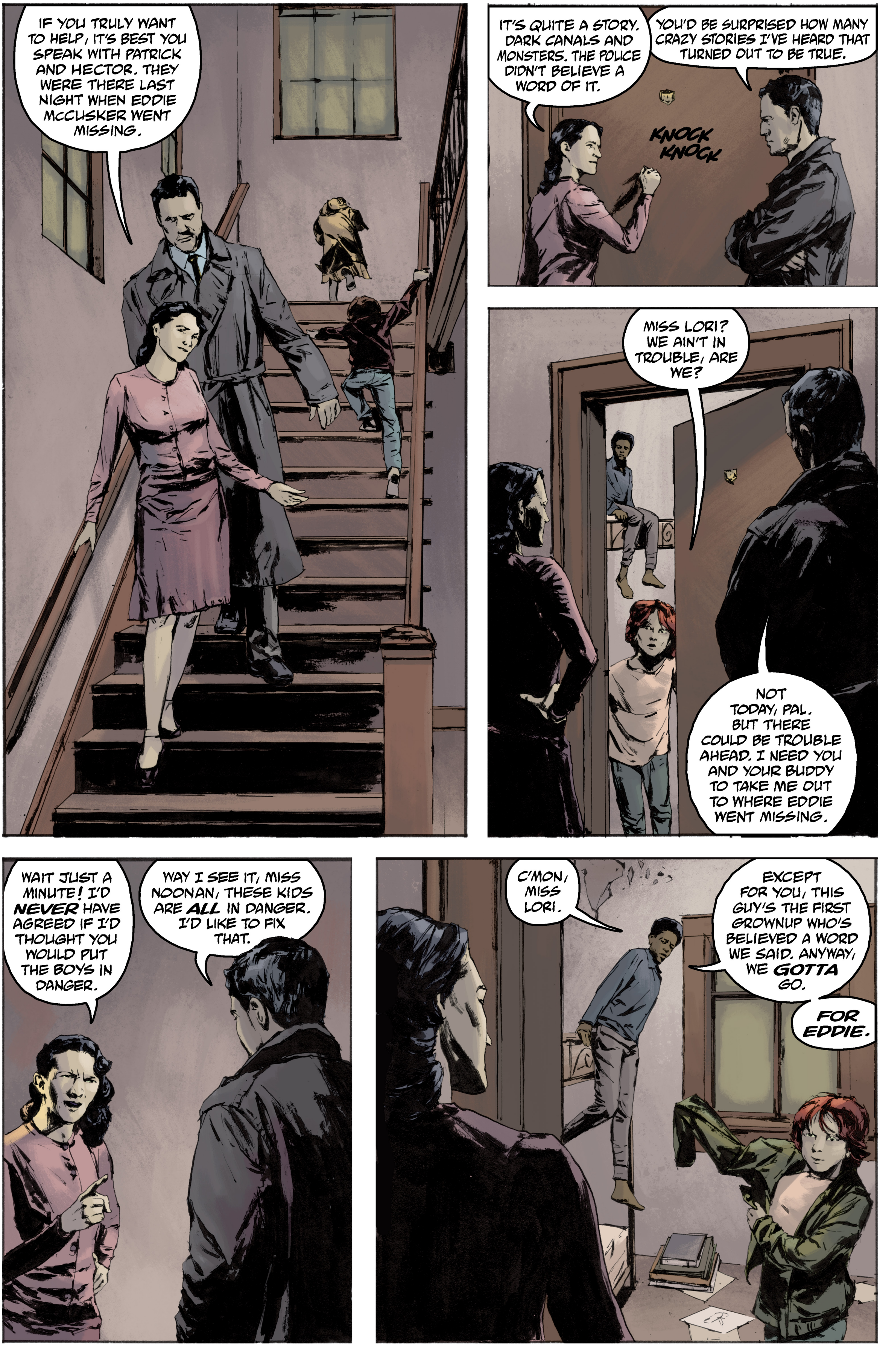
AHH!
SON OF A BITCH.
MR. CHURCH?
TCHH.

HRMM.
MORNING, MR. CHURCH.
I NOTICE YOU LEFT OFF THE "GOOD." YOU SOUND TROUBLED, MY FRIEND.
THE NIGHTMARES ARE BACK. I HATE TO DISTURB YOU, BUT--
NONSENSE, JOE. WE LOOK OUT FOR EACH OTHER, DON'T WE?
I'LL HAVE MARTHA BRING US SOME TEA.
I ALWAYS GET A HELL OF A HEADACHE AFTER YOU MAKE UP THIS CONCOCTION FOR ME.

BUT IT HELPS WITH THE NIGHTMARES, DOESN'T IT?
FOR A WHILE, AT LEAST. I JUST WISH IT DIDN'T SMELL SO BAD.
DRINK UP, LAD. YOU'LL BE GLAD YOU DID.
MEANTIME, I'VE GOT SOMETHING ELSE TO HELP CLEAR YOUR HEAD. THREE CHILDREN HAVE GONE MISSING IN THE PAST TWO WEEKS.
PAY A VISIT TO THE HUDSON STREET HOME FOR CHILDREN. THE ARTICLE QUOTES A WOMAN CALLED LORI NOONAN. PERHAPS YOU CAN START WITH--
I KNOW WHERE TO START, MR. CHURCH. I'VE BEEN DOING THIS A LONG TIME.
I KNOW HOW MUCH YOU HATE THAT YOUR HEALTH KEEPS YOU FROM DOING THE LEG-WORK THESE DAYS--
--BUT I'M NOT YOUR SIDEKICK. WHEN I TAKE A CASE, IT'S MY CASE.
OF COURSE, JOE.
OF COURSE IT IS...

"...AND I'M GLAD TO SEE YOU'RE FEELING BETTER. WE'LL BANISH THOSE NIGHTMARES YET."
LOOKING FOR LORI NOONAN. SHE INSIDE?
I THINK SHE'S READIN' TO THE LITTLE KIDS. BUT DON'T TELL HER WE'RE OUT HERE. SHE DON'T LIKE US PLAYIN' ON THE STAIRS.
"YOU CAN TRUST ME, KID. CAN YOU DESCRIBE MISS NOONAN, THOUGH? SO I'LL KNOW HER WHEN I SEE HER."
"TRUST ME, YOU CAN'T MISS HER...
HUDSON STREET HOME FOR CHILDREN

"...SHE'S REAL PRETTY."
'SCUSE ME, MISS...
I'M GUESSING YOU'RE LORI NOONAN.
THAT'S RIGHT. WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU, MISTER...?
YOU CAN CALL ME JOE. I'M A PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR. I SAW THE HEADLINE IN THE HERALD THIS MORNING AND WANTED TO SEE IF I COULD HELP.
NICE TO MEET YOU, JOE. BUT I'M AFRAID THE HOME CAN'T POSSIBLY AFFORD--
YOU'VE GOT ME WRONG, LADY. I'M NOT LOOKING FOR A PAYCHECK. IF THOSE KIDS ARE STILL ALIVE, SOME-ONE NEEDS TO--
LET'S STEP OUTSIDE. I DON'T WANT TO HAVE THIS CONVERSATION IN HERE.


IF YOU TRULY WANT TO HELP, IT'S BEST YOU SPEAK WITH PATRICK AND HECTOR. THEY WERE THERE LAST NIGHT WHEN EDDIE McCUSKER WENT MISSING.
IT'S QUITE A STORY. DARK CANALS AND MONSTERS. THE POLICE DIDN'T BELIEVE A WORD OF IT.
YOU'D BE SURPRISED HOW MANY CRAZY STORIES I'VE HEARD THAT TURNED OUT TO BE TRUE.
KNOCK KNOCK
MISS LORI? WE AIN'T IN TROUBLE, ARE WE?
NOT TODAY, PAL. BUT THERE COULD BE TROUBLE AHEAD. I NEED YOU AND YOUR BUDDY TO TAKE ME OUT TO WHERE EDDIE WENT MISSING.
WAIT JUST A MINUTE! I'D NEVER HAVE AGREED IF I'D THOUGHT YOU WOULD PUT THE BOYS IN DANGER.
WAY I SEE IT, MISS NOONAN, THESE KIDS ARE ALL IN DANGER. I'D LIKE TO FIX THAT.
C'MON, MISS LORI.
EXCEPT FOR YOU, THIS GUY'S THE FIRST GROWNUP WHO'S BELIEVED A WORD WE SAID. ANYWAY, WE GOTTA GO.
FOR EDDIE.

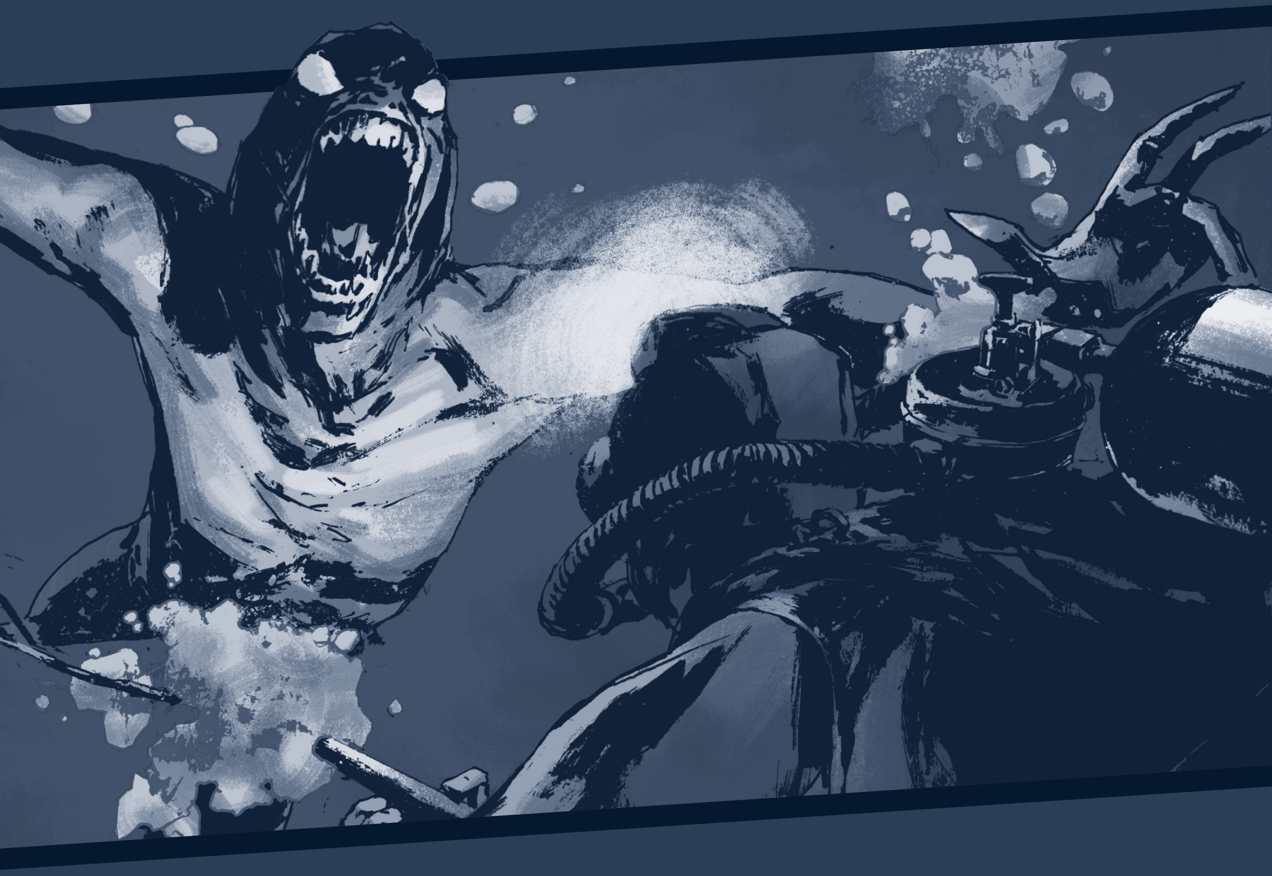
SOMETHING HAPPENS TO THOSE BOYS, I'LL HOLD YOU RESPONSIBLE.
SO WILL I.
ALL RIGHT, KID. NOW THAT MISS NOONAN CAN'T HEAR, WHY NOT TELL ME WHAT YOU AND YOUR PALS WERE DOING OUT IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT?
NOTHING GOOD, MISTER...BUT NOTHING THAT HAD ANYTHING TO DO WITH EDDIE GETTING TAKEN.
YOU'RE SURE ABOUT THAT?
IF YOU SEE WHAT WE SAW, YOU'LL BE SURE, TOO.
VVRRRMMM
HOW OLD ARE YOU GUYS? MISS NOONAN LETS YOU TAKE THIS THING OUT ON YOUR OWN?
HECK, NO. BUT IT'S EASY ENOUGH TO PADDLE IT OUT WITHOUT MAKING MUCH NOISE, TURN THE ENGINE ON AFTER.
WHAT MISS LORI DON'T KNOW WON'T HURT HER.
FAMOUS LAST WORDS.

VVVRRRMM
EDDIE GOT INTO A... A FIGHT WITH A GUY OVER ON THE BRIDGE. WE TOOK OFF IN THE BOAT...
ENDED UP PULLIN' IN HERE. EDDIE KILLED THE MOTOR AND WE HID OUT FOR A COUPLE OF MINUTES, HOPIN' THE GUY WOULDN'T CATCH US.
VVR-KZZSSHH
WE WERE RIGHT NEXT TO THE WALL. EDDIE WAS SITTING ON THE PROW, AND IT JUST... CAME UP AT HIM. STUCK ITS ARMS RIGHT OUTTA THE WATER AND... BAM.
YANKED HIM DOWN.
I GOTTA SAY, MISTER... NOW THAT WE'RE OUT HERE, I THINK THIS WAS A REALLY BAD IDEA. CAN WE GO BACK?
GIVE ME FIVE MINUTES TO LOOK AROUND--

AAHHH!
SPPLSSH
SON OF A BITCH!
HOLD ON TO THIS!
PSSHHH

THE RAT CATCHER

Part 2



JOE?
COME ON, JOE! DON'T LEAVE ME HERE! YOU GOTTA...
OH, NO.
PLEASE, GOD, DON'T LET THAT BE PATRICK'S BLOOD. OR...OR JOE'S. I DON'T THINK I CAN...
CRAP. I'VE GOTTA GET THE HELL OUTTA HERE.

POK

BAM

WUDDD

HUUUFF!
OH, MAN! YOU GOT HIM! I CAN'T BELIEVE--
HELP ME WITH HIM!
WAIT-- IS HE ALIVE?
COME ON, KID! BREATHE... YOU GOTTA... GOTTA...
KOFF KOFF
JOE!
HAT... WHERE'S MY...
WHAT DID YOU SAY, JOE?
JOE?

⟨TRANSLATED FROM 15TH-CENTURY SLAVONIAN⟩

‹DOGS, TOO, HAVE SIMPLE MINDS, AND YET THEY ARE SUPERIOR HUNTERS. YOU SAID YOURSELF YOU MADE HIM TO KILL WITCHES, THAT IT'S ALL HE KNOWS--›
‹THE GOLEM IS NOT A DOG!›
‹PLEASE, FATHER...THEY HAVE KILLED SO MANY. MY HVALA. LITTLE TADEJA. IF YOUR GOLEM CAN'T LEARN TO SEEK THE WITCHES OUT, SO BE IT...›
‹BUT YOU MUST AT LEAST SEE IF IT CAN BE TAUGHT. PLEASE.›
‹WE SHALL SEE, LADISLAUS.›
‹MY FRIEND...THERE ARE WITCHES IN THE VILLAGE.›

⟨WITCHES.⟩
⟨RELEASE ME! I'LL EAT YOUR DAMNED EYES!⟩
⟨YOU'LL DO NOTHING. TODAY IS THE LAST DAY FOR YOU--⟩
PTOO!
EEEGH!
AGHHH!
SSSSSS
⟨HIS IS THE... HHRRK... NAME OF THE DARK-NESS...⟩
⟨THAT'S ENOUGH! JUST KILL HER NOW!⟩

‹...HIS IS THE POWER...›
‹...OF THE MAELSTROM--›
KRUNCH
WITCHES.
MORE WITCHES.

UNNGH...
WELCOME BACK. I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU TO COME AROUND, SO I COULD KNOCK YOU OUT AGAIN.
LORI?
WHOA. HANG ON, BIG GUY. I STITCHED YOU UP, BUT YOU SHOULD STILL SEE A REAL DOCTOR. PLUS YOU PRACTICALLY DROWNED OUT THERE...
I DON'T THINK I--
THAT'S THE WAY HECTOR TELLS IT. BOY'S GOT A SERIOUS CASE OF THE HERO WORSHIP--SAYS YOU SAVED PATRICK'S LIFE.
THE WAY I SEE IT, YOU NEARLY GOT THEM **BOTH** KILLED. I CAN'T HAVE YOU PUTTING THESE BOYS IN DANGER.

I'M SORRY, LORI. I DIDN'T FIGURE ON--
I KNOW YOU DIDN'T, JOE. I KNOW YOU'RE JUST TRYING TO KEEP THE MONSTER FROM SNATCHING ANY MORE KIDS.
YEAH. THE MONSTER.
YOU WERE RESTLESS BEFORE YOU CAME AROUND. LIKE YOU WERE HAVING A NIGHTMARE. KEPT MUTTERING TO YOURSELF--
WHAT WAS I SAYING?
IT SOUNDED LIKE GIBBERISH. NOT ENGLISH, THAT'S FOR SURE.
ANYWAY, YOUR CLOTHES WERE SOAKED THROUGH. I'VE LAUNDERED THEM AND PUT THEM IN THE WARDROBE THERE. I'LL GIVE YOU A FEW MINUTES TO DRESS, IF YOU'RE FEELING UP TO IT.
JEEZ. GUESS NOBODY STOPPED TO WONDER IF I WAS THE SHY TYPE.

ARE YOU?
ASK ME WHEN I'VE GOT MY CLOTHES BACK ON. NOW SCAT!
IS HE UP? HE'S UP, ISN'T HE? YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO COME GET US!
YOU'RE AWAKE! I THOUGHT YOU WERE GONNA DIE! THAT WOULD'VE BEEN SO BAD, YOU SAVING PATRICK FROM THE RAT CATCHER AND THEN JUST DYING RIGHT THERE! I REALLY--
HELLO, HECTOR.

PATRICK'S SLEEPING NOW BUT HE WAS IN HERE BEFORE. WE WERE KINDA WATCHING OVER YOU, SEEIN' AS HOW YOU SAVED HIM AND ALL. YOU'RE HIS HERO, Y'KNOW? MINE, TOO!
I'M GLAD YOUR FRIEND'S ALL RIGHT, KID, BUT THE RAT CATCHER'S STILL DOWN THERE. I'VE GOTTA REPORT BACK TO MR. CHURCH.
WHO'S MR. CHURCH?
MAYBE THE MOST FAMOUS PRIVATE DETECTIVE WHO EVER LIVED. I WORK WITH HIM. AGE CAUGHT UP WITH HIM, SO HE HARDLY EVER LEAVES THE HOUSE NOW, BUT I--
IF HE HARDLY LEAVES THE HOUSE, SEEMS LIKE THAT MAKES YOU THE DETECTIVE, JOE.
IT'S NOT THAT SIMPLE. HE MAY NOT BE OUT THERE ON THE WATER WITH ME MOST OF THE TIME, BUT HE'S BRILLIANT.
ALMOST FORGOT...
THANKS FOR HANGING ON TO MY HAT, KID.

WOOF WOOF
WOOF
WOOF WOOF
WOOF WOOF

JOE?
I WANT TO MAKE SOMETHING CLEAR TO YOU.
I'M NOT JUST YOUR EYES AND EARS. I'M NOT YOUR HUNTING DOG.
OF COURSE NOT! WHY WOULD YOU... GOOD LORD, JOE, WHAT'S HAPPENED TO YOU?
COME AND LET ME PUT A SALVE ON THOSE WOUNDS. THEN YOU CAN TELL ME WHAT HAS YOU SO ANGRY.
...BUT IT ISN'T JUST MY BRUSQUE MANNER OR THESE STOLEN CHILDREN BOTHERING YOU. I'VE KNOWN YOU LONG ENOUGH TO REALIZE WHEN YOU'RE KEEPING SOMETHING FROM ME.
WHEN I WAS UNCONSCIOUS I HAD ANOTHER DREAM. BUT IT FELT LESS LIKE A DREAM THAN EVER. IT'S LIKE I'M LIVING IT--LIKE SOME KIND OF VISION...OR A MEMORY.
IT CAN ONLY BE THAT ONE OF THE ARCANE ENTITIES WE'VE ENCOUNTERED HAS LEFT ECHOES IN YOUR MIND. I'LL FIND A SOLUTION IN TIME, BUT UNTIL I CAN, LET ME MAKE YOU A CUP--
I DON'T WANT ANY GODDAMN TEA!

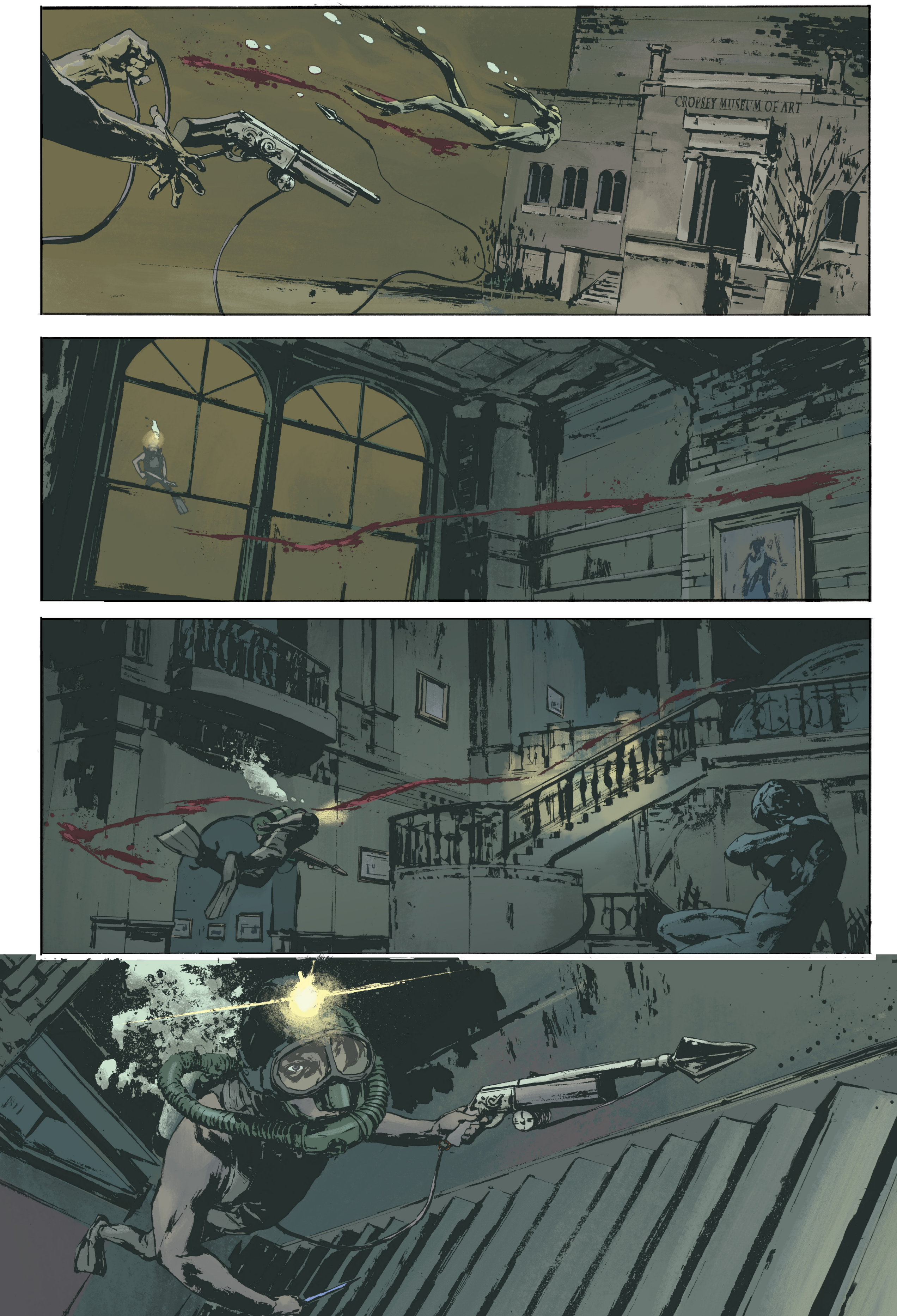
JOE, I REALLY THINK--
I KNOW YOU'RE TRYING TO HELP ME KEEP MY **HEAD** TOGETHER, BUT **THIS** AIN'T THE TIME. THE **RAT CATCHER'S** STILL OUT THERE.
ALL RIGHT, THEN. THAT'S WHERE WE'LL PUT OUR FOCUS FOR NOW.
I EMPLOYED THE PENDULUM WITH THE PRESUMPTION THAT THE RAT CATCHER MUST BE SOMETHING SUPERNATURAL, BUT I FOUND NOTHING TO INDICATE--
IT'S NOT SUPER-NATURAL?
IT SURE AS HELL **LOOKS** LIKE A MONSTER.
I NEVER SAID IT WASN'T A MONSTER.

WHILE MOST BEINGS FITTING THE DESCRIPTION YOU GAVE ARE CERTAINLY SUPERNATURAL, SOME ARE MERELY SPECIES UNKNOWN TO MODERN BIOLOGY.
SO THAT'S GOOD, RIGHT? IF THERE'S NOTHING OCCULT ABOUT THE SCABBY SON OF A BITCH, THAT MEANS IT OUGHTA DIE IF I STAB IT ENOUGH TIMES.
A REASONABLE ASSUMPTION.
NOW, AS TO THE MATTER OF NOT DROWN-ING...
...I BELIEVE WE HAVE EVERYTHING YOU'LL NEED. THE EQUIPMENT IS OLD, BUT IN WORKING ORDER.
GOOD TO KNOW...
"...DROWNING WOULD SORT OF RUIN THE REST OF MY PLAN."

VVRRRMMM
I STILL DON'T GET WHY YOU DIDN'T WANT HIM TO KNOW WE WERE HERE.
'CUZ HE'D HAVE MADE US GO BACK TO THE HOME AND I'M NOT GOING ANYWHERE. IF HE KILLS THE RAT CATCHER, I WANT TO SEE IT DEAD WITH MY OWN EYES.
POPCORN BAR

WHSSHHHH
SPOK

WHUD
FFWSSSH
CHOK


CROPSEY MUSEUM OF ART

SWSHHH
MISTER, I DON'T KNOW WHO YOU ARE--
--BUT YOU'VE GOTTA GET US OUT OF HERE!

THE
RAT CATCHER
Part
3

AH, MY FRIEND... YOUR DREAMS DARKEN AND YOUR CONFUSION GROWS, YET STILL YOU PUT ME OFF.
THIS IS THE STRONGEST DOSE YET...THE STRONGEST I DARE GIVE YOU...
"...BUT YOU'LL NEED TO DRINK IT SOON. IF YOU STAY AWAY TOO LONG...
LADY
"...I FEAR THINGS WILL GO BADLY FOR US BOTH."

YOU KIDS JUST STAY CALM, ALL RIGHT? WE'RE GOING TO FIGURE OUT--
YOU WORKIN' WITH THE MONSTER, OR ARE YOU HIS KEEPER OR SOME-THING?
MY NAME'S JOE. I TOLD MISS LORI I'D BRING YOU KIDS HOME, BUT, TO TELL THE TRUTH, I NEVER EXPECTED TO FIND YOU ALL STILL BREATHING.
WE'RE **NOT** ALL STILL BREATHING. THERE WERE TWO OTHERS--RUTHIE AND SAM. IT TOOK THEM...
...AND IT'LL BE BACK.
MISTER... HOW DID YOU GET PAST THE MONSTER? IS IT DEAD?

NOT YET.
JUST GIVE ME A SECOND TO FIGURE OUT HOW TO GET YOU ALL OUT OF HERE. I'M NOT EVEN SURE WHY IT KEPT YOU ALIVE.
WE'RE IN THE CUPBOARD. JUST FOOD ON THE SHELF...UNTIL HE GETS HUNGRY AGAIN.
BUT THAT'S OVER NOW. I'M GETTING YOU HOME.
EITHER THAT OR YOU JUST PUT YOURSELF RIGHT UP ON THE CUPBOARD SHELF WITH US.
NO WAY OUT UP HERE UNLESS YOU'RE HIDING A LADDER SOME-PLACE.

SO I GUESS THE ONLY WAY OUT...IS DOWN.
NO, PLEASE--
DON'T LEAVE US HERE!
SIT TIGHT. TRY NOT TO BE AFRAID. I'LL BE BACK FOR YOU.
SPLSH
WE'RE DEAD.

ME
YWAT LOLI

HUNNHH...

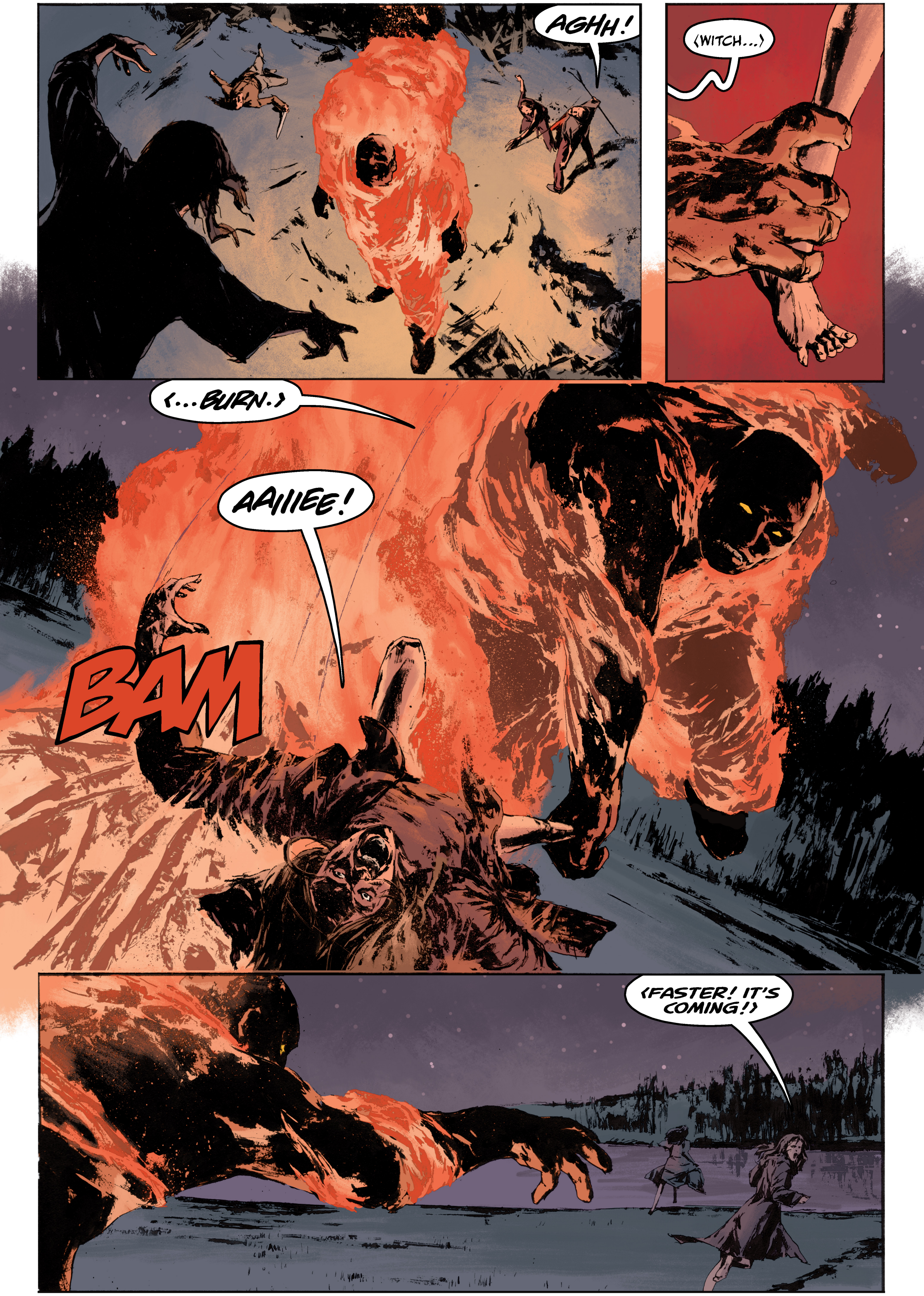
WHHSSH
SHUKK

THUK

‹TRANSLATED FROM 15TH-CENTURY SLAVONIAN›

‹NO...›
‹IT HAS FOUND US!›
‹WITCHES.›
‹WITCHES DIE.›
‹LITTLE MEN! YOU'VE MUSTERED UP YOUR COURAGE ONLY TO THROW YOUR LIVES AWAY!›

URKKK
KRRKKK
SHRIPPT
AGHH!
AIIIE!
‹ENOUGH! YOU'RE NOTHING BUT EARTH AND MAGIC, AND BOTH CAN BE TORN APART!›


AGHH!
‹WITCH...›
‹...BURN.›
AAIIIEE!
BAM
‹FASTER! IT'S COMING!›

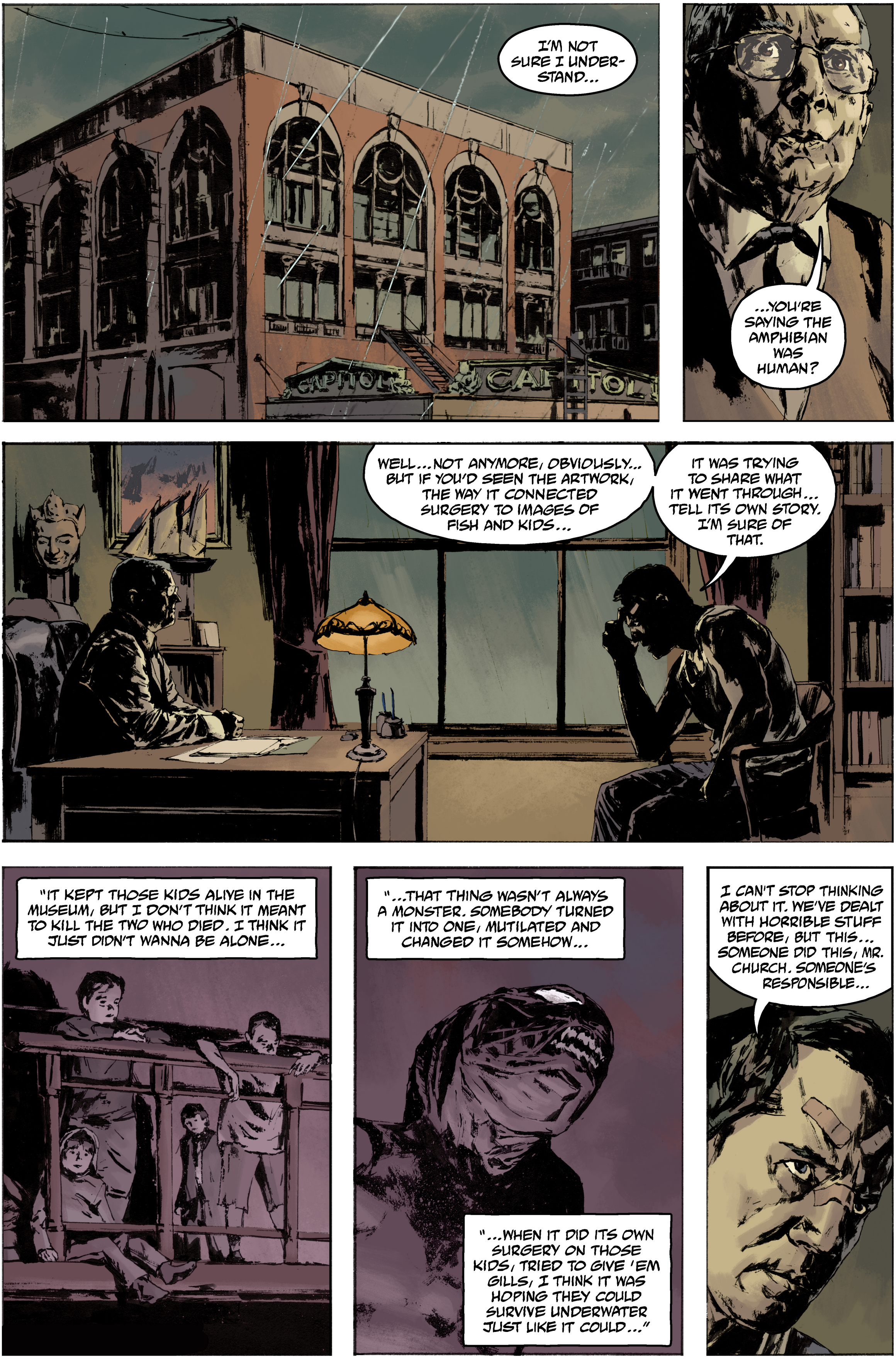
HRRNNN!
‹NO!›
SPLASH
SPLASH

URRH!

SLLLSH
UKKH!

KNOK
KNOK
OH MY GOD.
HI, LORI. GOT SOMEWHERE I CAN FALL DOWN?

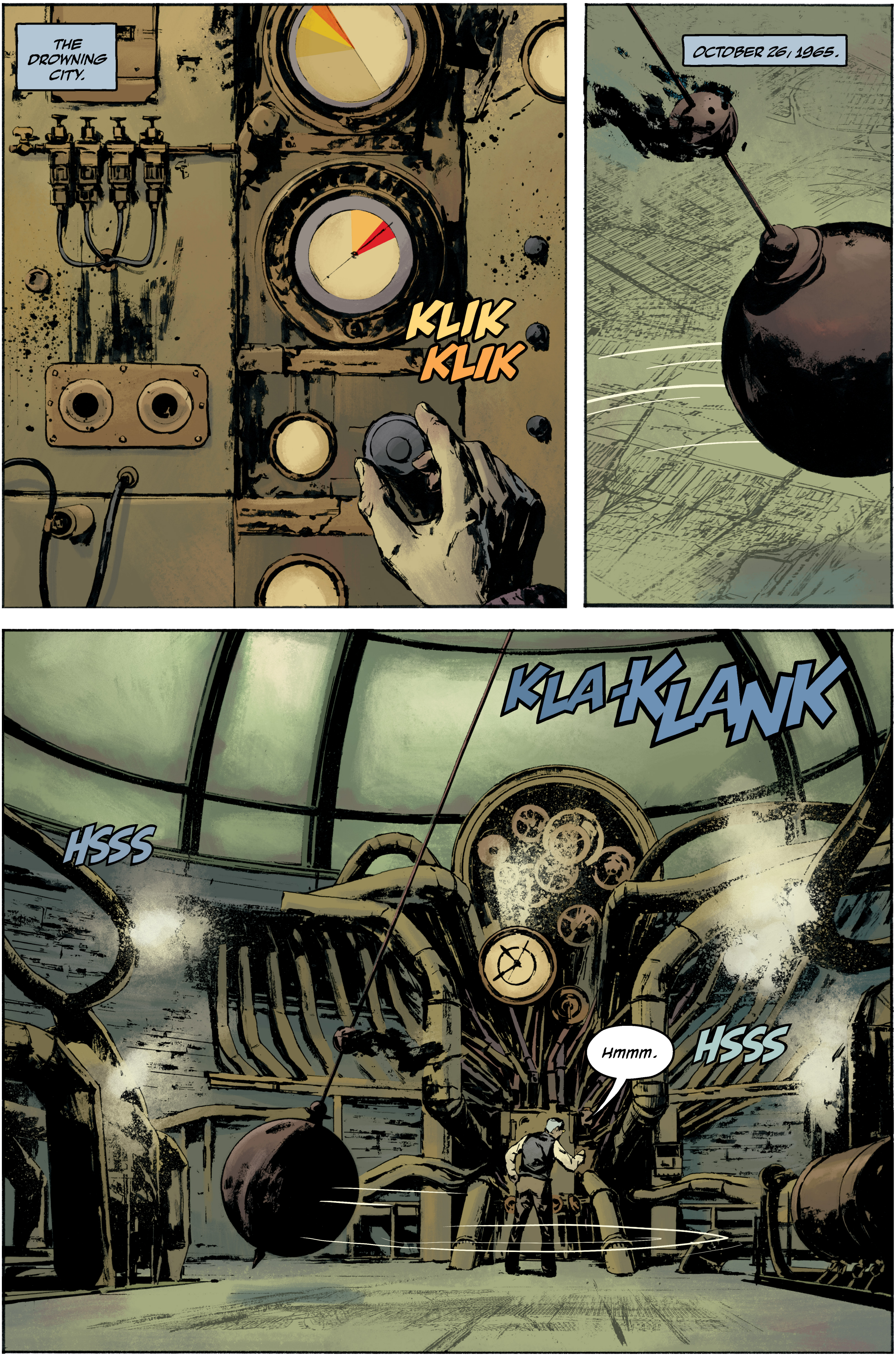
YOU WERE RIGHT, YOU KNOW. I WAS AN IDIOT, PUTTING THOSE BOYS IN DANGER.
I DO LIKE A MAN WHO KNOWS WHEN HE'S WRONG.
THEN YOU OUGHTA LOVE ME-- I'M WRONG ALL THE TIME. MAYBE I COULD SEE YOU SOMETIME WHEN I'M NOT BLEEDING ALL OVER THE PLACE.
I WOULDN'T MIND IT IF YOU TOOK ME TO THE PICTURES SOMETIME.
WELL...
SMEK
"...AS LONG AS YOU WOULDN'T MIND."

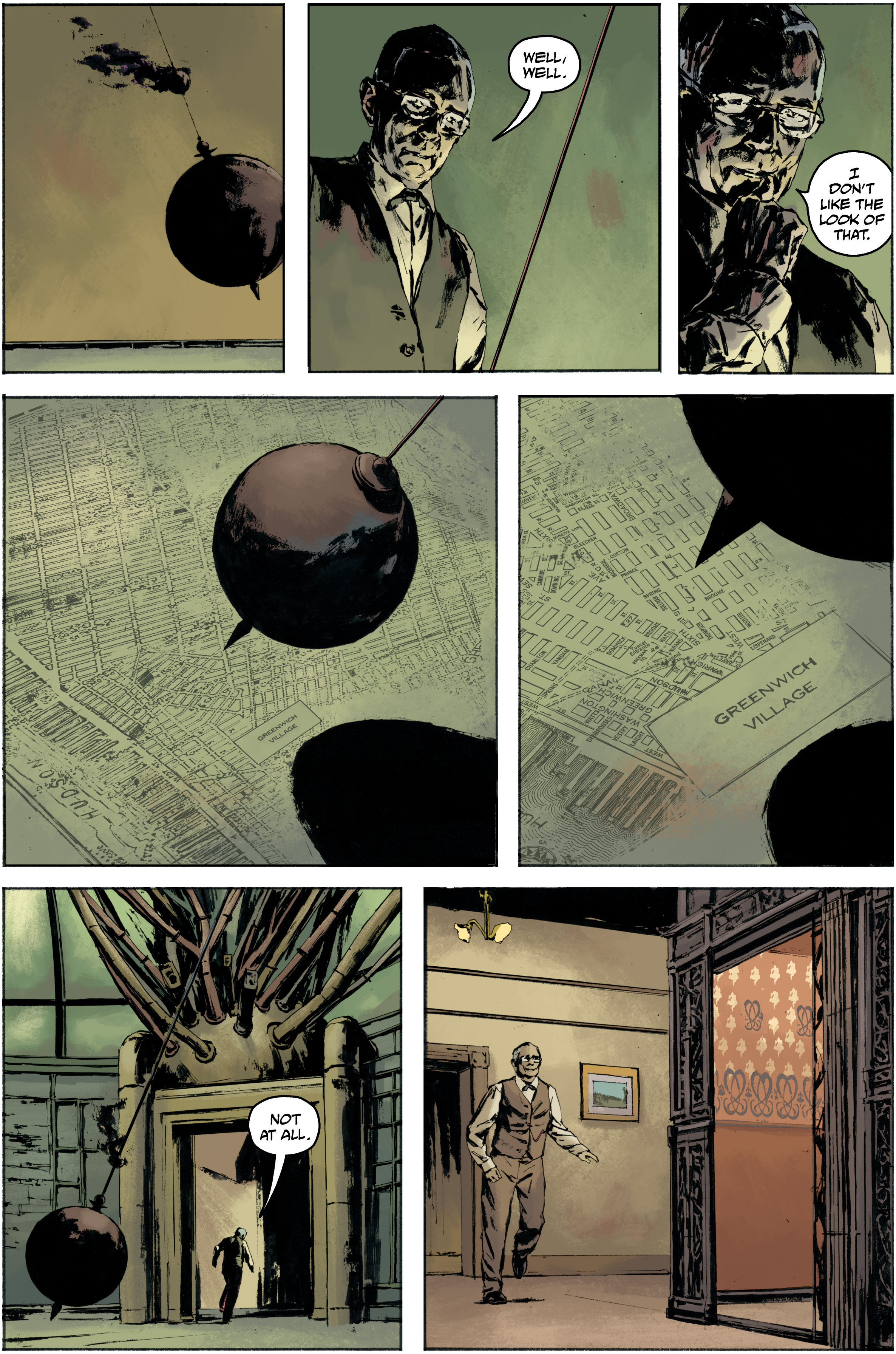

I'M NOT SURE I UNDER-STAND...
...YOU'RE SAYING THE AMPHIBIAN WAS HUMAN?
WELL...NOT ANYMORE, OBVIOUSLY... BUT IF YOU'D SEEN THE ARTWORK, THE WAY IT CONNECTED SURGERY TO IMAGES OF FISH AND KIDS...
IT WAS TRYING TO SHARE WHAT IT WENT THROUGH... TELL ITS OWN STORY. I'M SURE OF THAT.
"IT KEPT THOSE KIDS ALIVE IN THE MUSEUM, BUT I DON'T THINK IT MEANT TO KILL THE TWO WHO DIED. I THINK IT JUST DIDN'T WANNA BE ALONE...
"...THAT THING WASN'T ALWAYS A MONSTER. SOMEBODY TURNED IT INTO ONE, MUTILATED AND CHANGED IT SOMEHOW...
"...WHEN IT DID ITS OWN SURGERY ON THOSE KIDS, TRIED TO GIVE 'EM GILLS, I THINK IT WAS HOPING THEY COULD SURVIVE UNDERWATER JUST LIKE IT COULD..."
I CAN'T STOP THINKING ABOUT IT. WE'VE DEALT WITH HORRIBLE STUFF BEFORE, BUT THIS... SOMEONE DID THIS, MR. CHURCH. SOMEONE'S RESPONSIBLE...

THE HELL WITH IT. I DON'T KNOW WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT. BUT IF YOU WANT ME TO GO AND RETRIEVE THE CADAVER, I'LL HEAD OUT THERE TOMORROW.
PLEASE DO. I DON'T LIKE THE IDEA THAT WHOEVER WOULD DO SUCH A THING MIGHT STILL BE OUT THERE.
AND WHAT ABOUT YOU, JOE... ASIDE FROM YOUR VISIBLE INJURIES, HOW ARE YOU FARING?
I'LL BE ALL RIGHT ONCE I GET SOME SLEEP. I'M BANKING ON GOOD DREAMS... I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF NIGHTMARES. I'M SO TIRED I'M SEEING THINGS.
GO AND LIE DOWN, MY FRIEND. I'LL FIX YOU MY HERBAL TEA AND ASK MARTHA TO BRING IT TO YOUR ROOM. NO BAD DREAMS TONIGHT.
"SEEING THINGS."
WE CAN'T HAVE THAT.
THE END

THE SUNKEN DEAD

Part 1

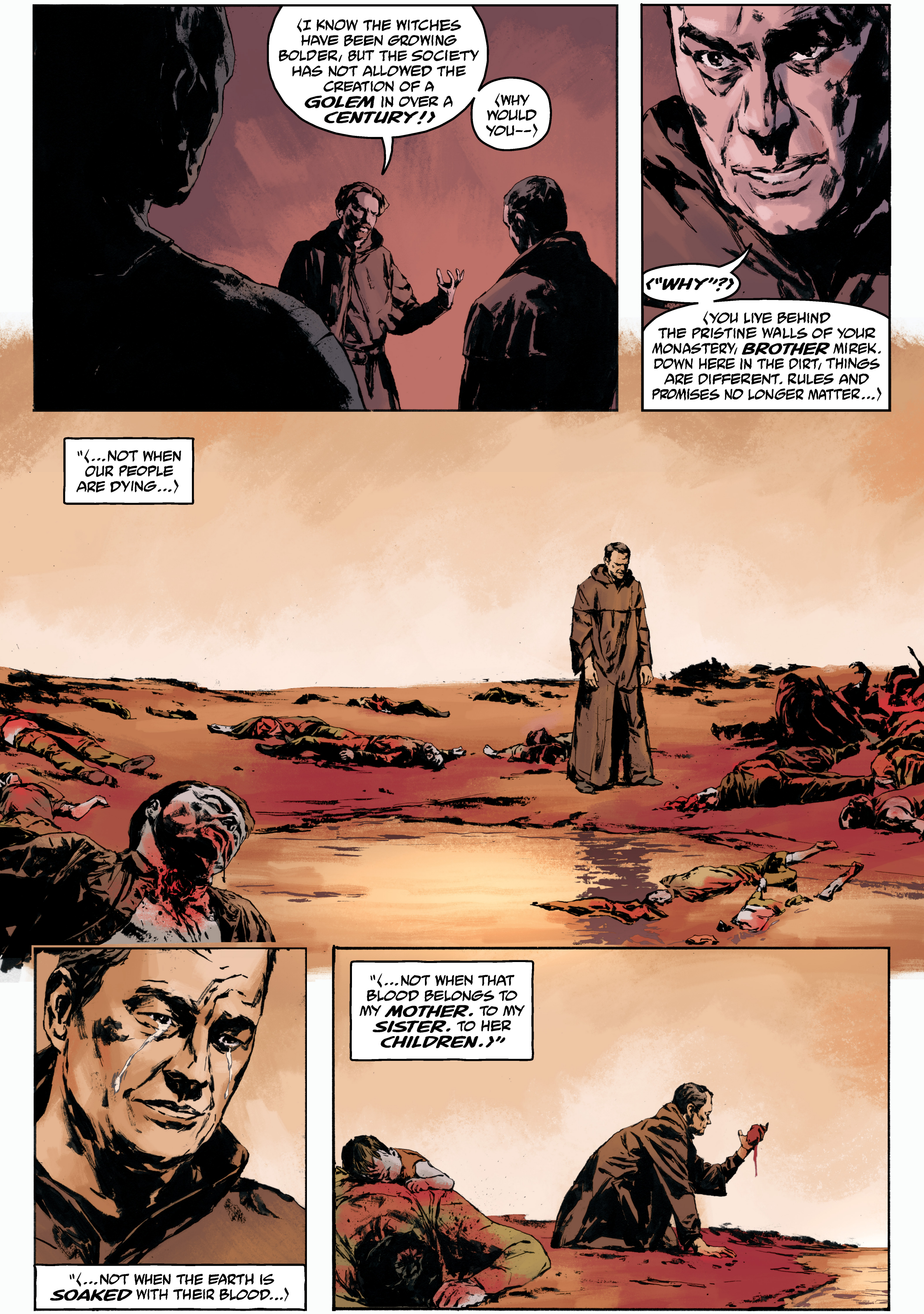

THE DROWNING CITY.
KLIK KLIK
OCTOBER 26, 1965.
KLA-KLANK
HSSS
Hmmm.
HSSS


WELL, WELL.
I DON'T LIKE THE LOOK OF THAT.
GREENWICH VILLAGE
NOT AT ALL.

JOE? COME HERE, LAD. YOU'RE NEEDED.
MARTHA, I NEED JOE. ANY INKLING AS TO HIS WHERE-ABOUTS?
YOU WON'T FIND HIM HERE, MR. CHURCH. HE'S OUT WITH HIS YOUNG LADY, AS YOU'D KNOW IF YOU PAID THE SLIGHTEST ATTENTION.
WOULD YOU LIKE A PIECE OF PIE?
I HAVEN'T TIME FOR PIE.
I'VE GOT TO FIND JOE.

⟨TRANSLATED FROM 15TH-CENTURY SLAVONIAN⟩

‹GORAN! SHOW YOURSELF!›
‹BROTHER MIREK? YOU'RE FAR FROM HOME, MY FRIEND.›
‹IS IT TRUE?›
‹SEE FOR YOURSELF.›
‹OH, YOU FOOL.›



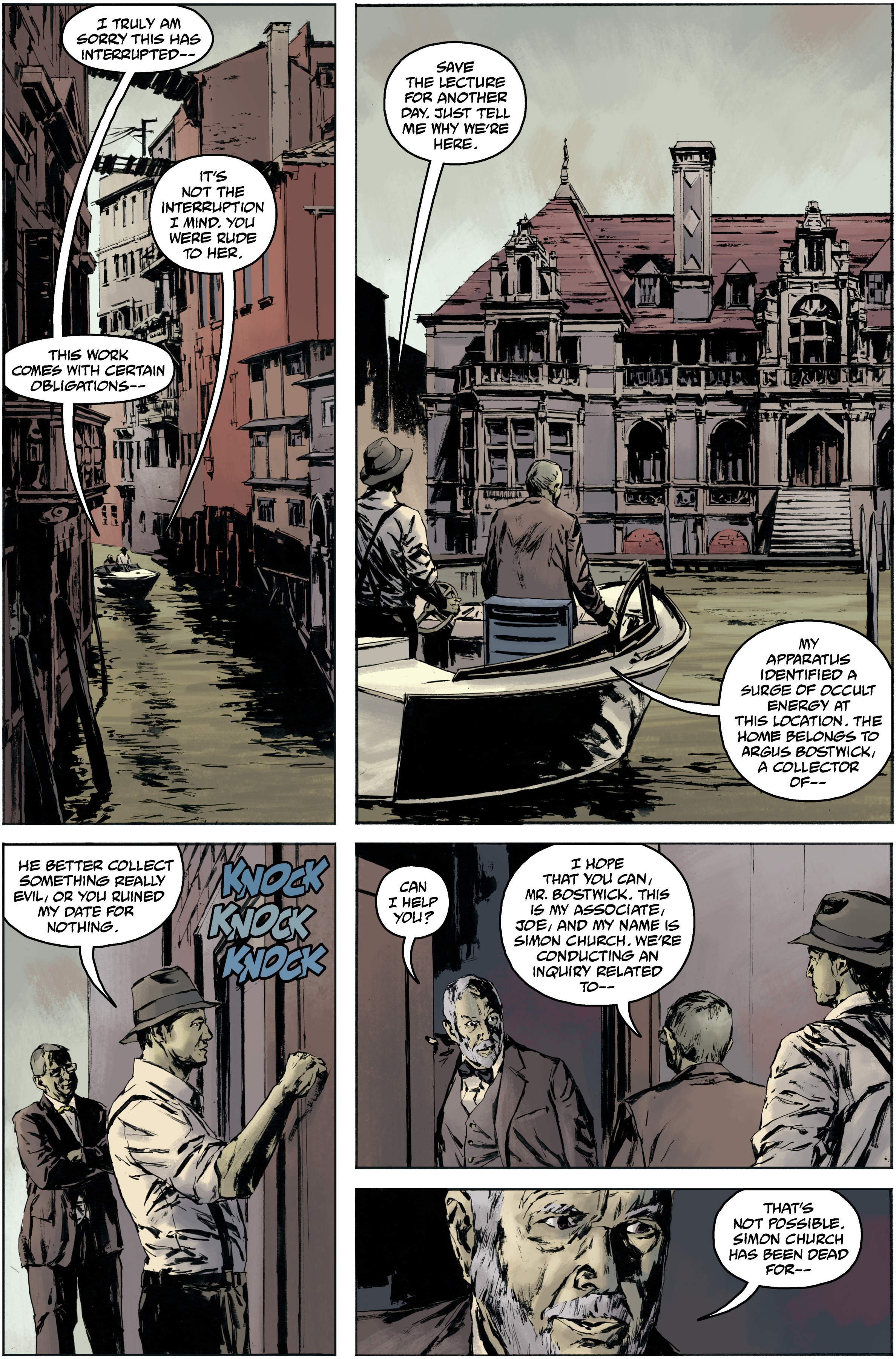
‹I KNOW THE WITCHES HAVE BEEN GROWING BOLDER, BUT THE SOCIETY HAS NOT ALLOWED THE CREATION OF A GOLEM IN OVER A CENTURY!›
‹WHY WOULD YOU--›
‹"WHY"?›
‹YOU LIVE BEHIND THE PRISTINE WALLS OF YOUR MONASTERY, BROTHER MIREK. DOWN HERE IN THE DIRT, THINGS ARE DIFFERENT. RULES AND PROMISES NO LONGER MATTER...›
"‹...NOT WHEN OUR PEOPLE ARE DYING...›
"‹...NOT WHEN THE EARTH IS SOAKED WITH THEIR BLOOD...›
"‹...NOT WHEN THAT BLOOD BELONGS TO MY MOTHER. TO MY SISTER. TO HER CHILDREN.›"

‹WHEN THE WITCHES HAVE MURDERED YOUR FAMILY, BROTHER MIREK--WHEN THEY HAVE RIPPED INFANTS FROM THE HANDS OF THEIR MOTHERS IN YOUR VILLAGE--JUDGE ME THEN.›
‹YOU KNOW THESE THINGS CAN'T BE CONTROLLED, GORAN. I DON'T EVEN KNOW HOW YOU MANAGED TO CREATE ONE. THE SOCIETY NEVER TAUGHT US ENOUGH TO--›
‹THAT'S RIGHT. THEY KEPT THINGS FROM US...›
"‹...THE MOST POWERFUL, MOST DANGEROUS THINGS. THE MOST USEFUL THINGS...›"
‹...BUT I'VE GOT MOST OF THEM HERE, MIREK. ALL WRITTEN DOWN IN MY OWN HAND.›
‹IMPOSSIBLE. THE MASTERS FORBADE STUDENTS EVEN TO READ FROM THEIR PRIVATE LIBRARY.›
‹THEY RELIED ON FEAR TO KEEP US OUT, BUT I FEARED IGNORANCE MORE THAN I DID THEIR WRATH. THE MASTERS WERE SHORTSIGHTED. THEY SHOULD HAVE TAUGHT US ALL THEY KNEW.›
‹THE SOCIETY IS MEANT TO PRESERVE THE ANCIENT WAYS, TO SHIELD MANKIND FROM THE DARKNESS. SO I PRESERVED THOSE WAYS, THE OLD MAGIC, THE BEST WAY I KNEW...›
‹THE MASTERS ARE NOT HERE TO PROTECT MY VILLAGE, BROTHER...›

"‹...SO I MADE A CREATURE THAT WOULD.›"
ARE YOU REALLY STILL NOT GOING TO TELL ME WHERE YOU'RE TAKING ME FOR THIS MYSTERIOUS PICNIC, JOE?
IF YOU GRAB ME A BOTTLE OF POP FROM THE BACK, I MIGHT JUST BE PERSUADED.
YOU'RE LUCKY I'M A GIRL WHO LIKES SURPRISES. ROOT BEER ALL RIGHT WITH YOU?
JOE, I SAID IS--
WHAT'S THE MATTER?
OVER THERE.
IT'S MR. CHURCH.

BUT YOU SAID HE NEVER GOES OUT.
ALMOST NEVER. AND NEVER WITHOUT A DAMN GOOD REASON.
MR. CHURCH!
WHAT'S GOING ON?
DON'T CONCERN YOURSELF, JOE. I WOULDN'T WANT MY WORRIES TO BECOME YOURS.
IF THE APPARATUS PICKED UP SOME-THING NASTY, I'M NOT GONNA LET YOU WALK INTO TROUBLE WITHOUT ME. NOT IN YOUR CONDITION.
I ADMIT I'M NOT THE MAN I USED TO BE, JOE...BUT I'VE NO CHOICE, DO I?
YOUR ATTENTIONS ARE FOCUSED ELSEWHERE OF LATE.

WITH ALL DUE RESPECT, MR. CHURCH, JOE HAS A LIFE TO LIVE.
I DON'T DISAGREE, MISS NOONAN. HOWEVER, I MARVEL AT THE ORDER OF HIS PRIORITIES.
YOU KNOW, I'D SO LOOKED FORWARD TO MEETING YOU...
...AND NOW I CAN'T IMAGINE WHY.
HELP ME UP, PLEASE, JOE. YOU'D BEST ACCOMPANY YOUR FRIEND SO HE DOESN'T INADVERTENTLY STUMBLE INTO A CANAL AND DROWN.
LORI, MAYBE THIS CAN WAIT. LET ME SEE IF I CAN--
YOU'VE GOT WORK TO DO. DON'T WORRY, YOU CAN MAKE IT UP TO ME.
I'M SORRY, JOE.
GO ON OVER TO THE DOCK AND I'LL PICK YOU UP THERE. AND LATER ON, WHEN I SEND HER FLOWERS TO APOLOGIZE...YOU'RE PAYING THE BILL.


I TRULY AM SORRY THIS HAS INTERRUPTED--
IT'S NOT THE INTERRUPTION I MIND. YOU WERE RUDE TO HER.
THIS WORK COMES WITH CERTAIN OBLIGATIONS--
SAVE THE LECTURE FOR ANOTHER DAY. JUST TELL ME WHY WE'RE HERE.
MY APPARATUS IDENTIFIED A SURGE OF OCCULT ENERGY AT THIS LOCATION. THE HOME BELONGS TO ARGUS BOSTWICK, A COLLECTOR OF--
HE BETTER COLLECT SOMETHING REALLY EVIL, OR YOU RUINED MY DATE FOR NOTHING.
KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK
CAN I HELP YOU?
I HOPE THAT YOU CAN, MR. BOSTWICK. THIS IS MY ASSOCIATE, JOE, AND MY NAME IS SIMON CHURCH. WE'RE CONDUCTING AN INQUIRY RELATED TO--
THAT'S NOT POSSIBLE. SIMON CHURCH HAS BEEN DEAD FOR--

A CONVENIENT FICTION I WAS FORCED TO CREATE, IN ORDER TO AVOID UNWANTED ATTENTION.
PLEASE COME IN. THERE ARE SO MANY THINGS I'D LOVE TO DISCUSS WITH YOU. WE SHARE SO MANY INTERESTS.
SO I SEE. JUST A GLIMPSE AT SOME OF THE VOLUMES IN YOUR LIBRARY HAVE ME ENVIOUS. I SPY A TREATISE OR TWO ON THE OCCULT THAT EVEN I'VE BEEN UNABLE TO ACQUIRE.
OH, THIS ISN'T MY LIBRARY...
THIS IS THE LIBRARY.
OH, MY.

ENVIOUS AS I AM, MR. BOSTWICK, WHAT'S DRAWN US HERE IS NOT THE COLLECTION ITSELF BUT SOMETHING I SUSPECT MIGHT BE A RECENT ADDITION.
AN ARTIFACT OF SOME KIND...
...OR PERHAPS A GRIMOIRE?
I'M FOREVER ADDING ITEMS, MR. CHURCH...
"...BUT I'M AFRAID I CAN'T THINK OF ANYTHING IN PARTICULAR THAT WOULD WARRANT ***YOUR*** ATTENTION."
YOU'VE GOTTA BE FRIGGIN' KIDDING ME.

WHERE IS YOUR ASSOCIATE?
WE'RE INVESTIGATORS, ARGUS. I EXPECT HE IS INVESTIGATING.
YOU HAVE NO RIGHT!

WHAT ARE YOU UP TO, OLD MAN? NOTHING GOOD.
GET OUT OF HERE! YOU HAVE NO BUSINESS INTERFERING!
I'D SAY SOME-ONE'S GOT TO.
PLEASE... JUST GIVE ME THE BOOK.
THEY'RE MY FAMILY, DON'T YOU SEE?
WHATEVER YOU DO, JOE, DO NOT GIVE HIM THAT BOOK.
I FEAR MR. BOSTWICK HAS ALREADY BEGUN A RITUAL HE HOPES WILL RESURRECT HIS FAMILY...
...BUT THE SPELLS IN THAT GRIMOIRE ARE TOO DANGEROUS. UNCONTROLLABLE. THE PAGES REEK OF MALICE. THAT'S WHAT THE APPARATUS PICKED UP THIS MORNING.
I'M SORRY, BOSTWICK. YOUR GRIEF HAS UNHINGED YOU. I KNOW YOU MISS THEM--

NO!
UNHFF--!
THUD
THAT'S ENOUGH OF THAT, OLD MAN!
WHOOSH
I CAN'T STOP NOW, DON'T YOU SEE?
AGH!
WHOOOOSH

SON OF A--
BOSTWICK... THE POWER SIMMERING IN THIS HOUSE MUST BE DISPERSED.
IT'S TOO DANGEROUS.
YOU SANCTIMONIOUS BASTARD. I SCOURED THE WORLD FOR THIS GRIMOIRE. I WON'T LET YOU--

KRAK
MR. CHURCH!
GIVE ME THE BOOK, BOSTWICK!
RETURN TO ME, DARLING WIFE.
AWAKEN, SISTER. OPEN YOUR EYES, BOYS, AND SEE YOUR FATHER AGAIN.

OH, HELL NO...
JOE... YOU'VE GOT TO...
THEY'RE DEAD! FORTY YEARS DROWNED, LIKE HALF THE DAMN CITY!
LET IT GO!
PLEASE...
THEY DON'T HAVE TO BE.
ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS STAND ASIDE AND LET ME FINISH.
ACTUALLY... I THINK YOU'RE PRETTY MUCH DONE.
KRAK

KRASHH
THAT ONE, MARGARET! KILL HIM!
NOW THAT'S JUST PLAIN RUDE.

STOP! DON'T HURT HER!
"HURT HER"? SHE'S DEAD, YOU MORON.
LOOK AT THEM, BOSTWICK!
KRAK
THIS CAN'T BE WHAT YOU WANTED. HOW DO WE STOP IT?
BRING ME THE BOOK, JOE!
HOLD THAT THOUGHT.
NO! MY BOYS!

IDIOT. WITH ENOUGH POWER YOU CAN RESURRECT THE DEAD...BUT YOU CAN'T ERASE THE DEATH THEY SUFFERED.
"I TOLD YOU, THIS IS POWER YOU CAN'T CONTROL...
"...NOW LET US PUT AN END TO IT, BEFORE SOMETHING WORSE HAPPENS."
MAYBE I CAN'T MAKE THEM AS THEY WERE, BUT THERE'S LIFE IN THEM NOW. I WON'T LET YOU TAKE THAT AWAY...
"...AND TO HELL WITH THE CONSEQUENCES."
CRAP.

THE
SUNKEN DEAD
Part
2

THEY WANT TO KEEP US APART! KILL THEM AND--
YOU THINK THEY RECOGNIZE YOU, BOSTWICK? THEY'RE DEAD...
KRAK
NO... ANNETTE... MARGARET...
AND IF THERE'S ONE THING I KNOW ABOUT THE RESURRECTED DEAD--
KRUNK

"IT'S THAT THEY HATE THE LIVING.
"THEY DON'T KNOW YOU, OLD MAN. THEY DON'T WANT TO KNOW YOU...
KRASH
"...THEY JUST WANT TO HURT YOU."
TAKE THE DAMN BOOK. FIGURE THIS OUT.

ANNETTE, MY LOVE... I KEPT YOU SAFE...I BROUGHT YOU BACK...
YOU BROUGHT SOMETHING BACK.
NEITHER OF YOU IS LISTENING...
A SPELL LIKE THAT...
...YOU CAN'T KEEP IT LOCALIZED. YOU CAN'T LIMIT IT TO JUST FOUR PEOPLE.
IT SPREADS.
KLIK

NO!
SNAP
AIIIE!
NO! LEAVE HER ALONE!
ARE YOU OUT OF YOUR DAMN MIND?
URRHHH!
DAMN IT.

WHY DO YOU ALWAYS HAVE TO BE RIGHT?
JOE... I'M GOING TO NEED...A MINUTE...
WORKING ON IT!

...OH...
MY LOVE...
UUKK
HURKK
UGGHH.

SPLUTCH
ANY TIME NOW, MR. CHURCH!
LIKE YOU...MY FRIEND...I'M WORKING ON IT...
WORK FASTER!

THAT WILL HAVE TO DO FOR NOW.
CARO ITERUM REQUIESCAT, ET SPIRITUS PROTINUS ALTE VOLET.
IT'S NOT **WORKING!** WHY ISN'T IT WORKING?
REDITE NUNC AD SOMNUM AETERNUM.
CAN'T I JUST RIP THE BOOK UP?
YOU **WILL** NOT! GIVE IT A MOMENT.

"CARO ITERUM REQUIESCAT, ET SPIRITUS PROTINUS ALTE VOLET.
"REDITE NUNC AD SOMNUM AETERNUM.
"CARO ITERUM REQUIESCAT."
HHUURR...
"REDITE NUNC...
"...AD SOMNUM AETERNUM."

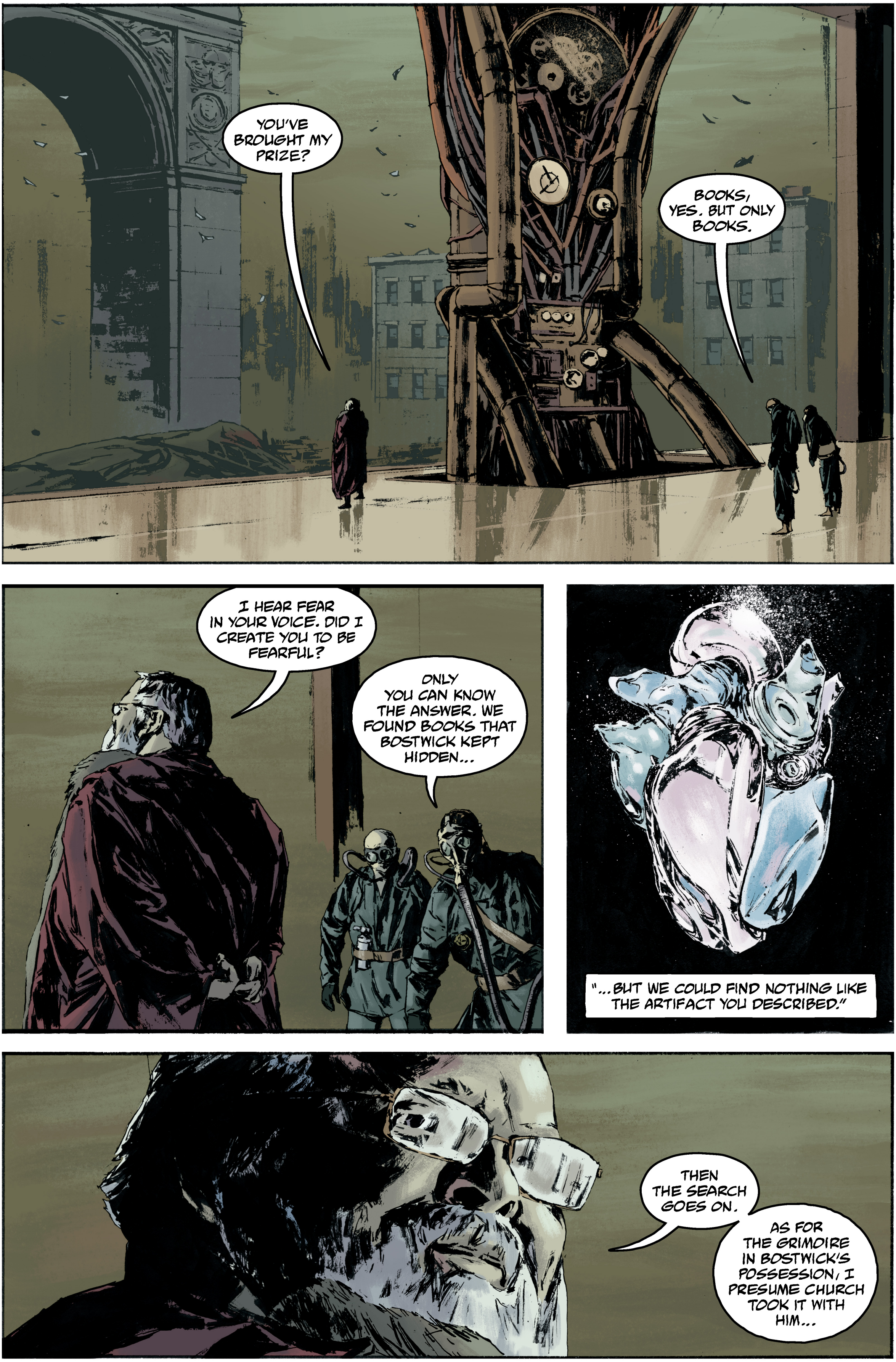
IT'S NOT WORKING!
I TOLD YOU--
--GIVE IT A BLOODY SECOND TO FINISH TAKING EFFECT!
FWAP
SPLASH

SPLASH
HAPPY NOW?
THRILLED.
YOU SHOULD NEVER HAVE COME OUT TODAY.
IF I HADN'T, YOU'D LIKELY BE DEAD.
YOU'RE HOLDING YOURSELF TOGETHER WITH SPIT AND SHOE-LACES--
WITH BIOMECHANICAL MAGIC, AS YOU WELL KNOW. BUT I AGREE THAT I MUST CRAFT SOMETHING MORE POWERFUL. UNTIL THEN, JOE, I HAVE YOU TO DO MY WORK FOR ME.

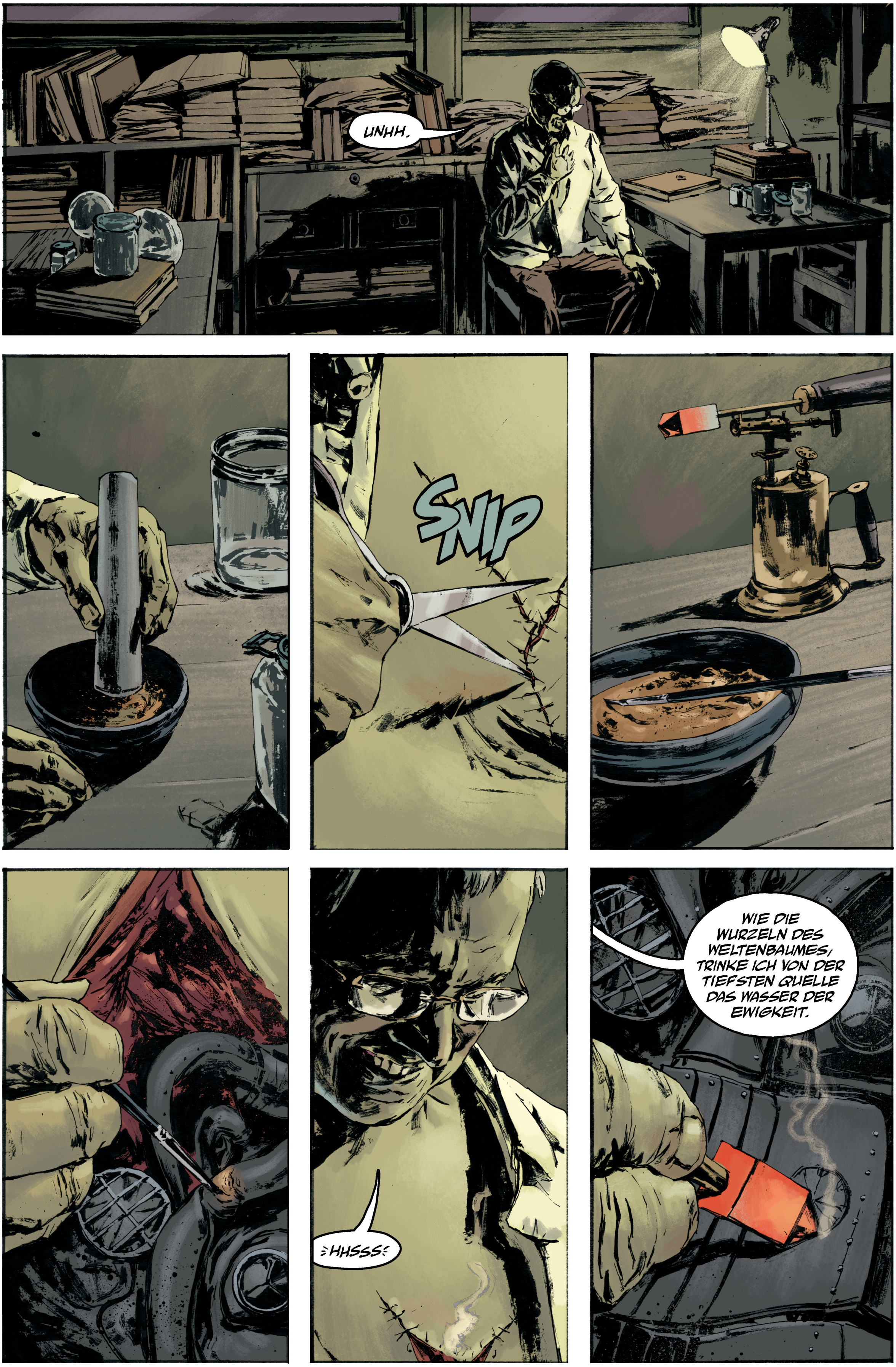
I'M DOING MY WORK, NOT YOURS.
WE'RE PARTNERS, REMEMBER? I'M NOT YOUR SIDE-KICK.
OF COURSE I REMEMBER...
SPLASH
"...I'M NOT REALLY IN A POSITION TO ARGUE, AM I?"
THUNK
BUMP
THUD
Hunh.
KRAK

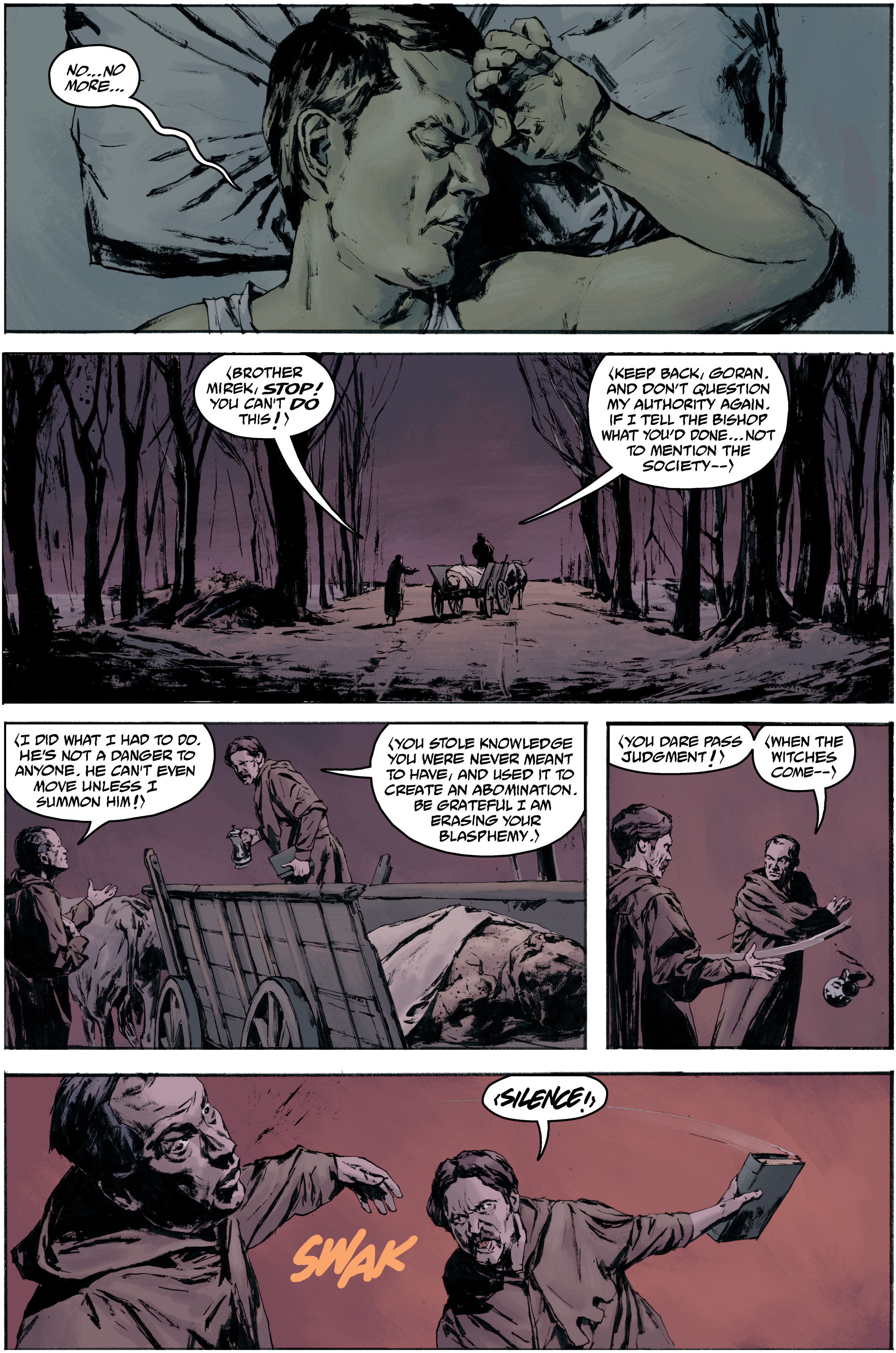
WHICH ONE?
DON'T KNOW. WE TAKE THEM ALL.
8TH AVENUE

UNGH...
JOE...WHAT HAPPENED?
YOU PASSED OUT RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF ME GIVING YOU CRAP. FOR A BIT IT LOOKED LIKE THAT GREASY METAL TICKER OF YOURS HAD STALLED FOR GOOD.
ABSURD. IF ANYTHING, I FELL UNCONSCIOUS DUE TO BLOOD LOSS.
YOU HAVE MY THANKS, OF COURSE. THOUGH YOU NEEDN'T HAVE STITCHED ME UP. I'M GOING TO NEED TO MAKE SOME ADJUSTMENTS TO--
OH, I DIDN'T DO THE SEWING.
THAT WAS ME.
AND YOU'RE QUITE WELCOME, MR. CHURCH.


YOU'VE BROUGHT MY PRIZE?
BOOKS, YES. BUT ONLY BOOKS.
I HEAR FEAR IN YOUR VOICE. DID I CREATE YOU TO BE FEARFUL?
ONLY YOU CAN KNOW THE ANSWER. WE FOUND BOOKS THAT BOSTWICK KEPT HIDDEN...
"...BUT WE COULD FIND NOTHING LIKE THE ARTIFACT YOU DESCRIBED."
THEN THE SEARCH GOES ON.
AS FOR THE GRIMOIRE IN BOSTWICK'S POSSESSION, I PRESUME CHURCH TOOK IT WITH HIM...

"...CHURCH AND HIS BRUTE."
YOU ALL RIGHT?
IT'S A LOT TO TAKE IN. I FEEL A BIT LIGHTHEADED, HONESTLY...
...BUT I GUESS YOU CAN FIX THAT IF YOU WANT TO.
YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE LET HER SEE ME LIKE THAT, JOE. THEY WERE MY SECRETS TO KEEP.
I WAS WORRIED. STILL AM. I THINK YOU'D BETTER TELL ME ABOUT THESE "ADJUSTMENTS" YOU'RE PLANNING TO MAKE.
I'LL BE FINE.
GET SOME SLEEP. ONE OF US OUGHT TO.


UNHH.
SNIP
HHSSS
WIE DIE WURZELN DES WELTENBAUMES, TRINKE ICH VON DER TIEFSTEN QUELLE DAS WASSER DER EWIGKEIT.



‹TRANSLATED FROM 15TH-CENTURY SLAVONIAN›

‹FEAR AND ARROGANCE HAVE LED YOU ASTRAY. I AM TRYING TO BRING YOU BACK TO THE RIGHTEOUS PATH.›
KRAK
‹YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND... THESE AREN'T THE WITCHES YOU KNOW. THEY'RE NOT EARTH WORSHIPERS OR HERBALISTS... NOT PETTY DABBLERS IN SPELL-CRAFT.›
‹THESE CREATURES ARE NO LONGER HUMAN. THEY'VE GIVEN THEMSELVES OVER TO SOMETHING ANCIENT... AN EVIL DARKER THAN ANY YOU'VE ENCOUNTERED.›
‹MORE EVIL THAN SATAN? DARKER THAN THE DEVIL HIMSELF?›
‹DARK ENOUGH TO MAKE THE DEVIL PISS HIMSELF.›
‹YOU FORGET YOURSELF, GORAN. BE GRATEFUL I CAN PERFORM THE RITUAL THAT WILL UNDO YOUR FOOLISHNESS.›
‹WE WILL STAND AGAINST THE WITCHES OURSELVES, AS MEN OF GOD AND ACOLYTES OF THE SOCIETY. IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN ENOUGH. IT ALWAYS WILL BE--›

SHREEE!
‹DIE!›
URRKKK!
‹WITCHES.›

WITCHES.
HOLY CRAP.
UHNFF.
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING? LORI JUST STITCHED YOU UP.
AND I'M GRATEFUL, BUT I NEEDED MORE THAN STITCHES. IF I'M GOING TO CONTINUE FIGHTING ENTROPY, I MUST MAKE IMPROVEMENTS FROM TIME TO TIME.
GIVE ME THAT.
YOU'D THINK WITH ALL YOUR MAGIC AND MECHANISMS, YOU'D COME UP WITH A HINGE OR A ZIPPER OR SOME-THING FOR THIS.

LISTEN--
I'M TRYING NOT TO LIKE HER, JOE. I DON'T APPRECIATE THE DISTRACTION SHE REPRESENTS FOR YOU. BUT SHE HAS BACK-BONE, AND I CAN'T HELP ADMIRING HER FOR THAT.
I'M GLAD TO HEAR IT... BUT THERE'S SOME-THING ELSE WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT.
THE DREAMS. HALF THE TIME THEY'RE MORE LIKE VISIONS NOW. OR MEMORIES, BUT THAT DOESN'T MAKE ANY SENSE.
WHAT-EVER THEY ARE, THEY'RE GETTING WORSE.
YOU'VE TAPPED INTO SOME-THING. THE GHOST OF SOME BIT OF OCCULT HISTORY HAS TAKEN ROOT IN YOUR MIND. YOU MAY HAVE BEEN INFECTED BY IT, A KIND OF CONTAGION...
I'LL SORT IT OUT IN TIME. UNTIL THEN, I'LL MIX A STRONGER REMEDY. ASK MARTHA TO MAKE US A POT OF TEA.
THIS SHOULD BE READY BY THE TIME THE KETTLE WHISTLES. I'LL BRING IT IN TO YOU.
JUST DON'T MAKE IT TOO STRONG. I'VE GOT SOME THINGS IN MY LIFE NOW THAT I DEFINITELY DON'T WANT TO FORGET.
AND I'M HAPPY FOR YOU, MY FRIEND...
...BUT THERE ARE ALSO THINGS YOU SIMPLY CANNOT BE ALLOWED TO REMEMBER.
THE END

JOE GOLEM™ OCCULT DETECTIVE

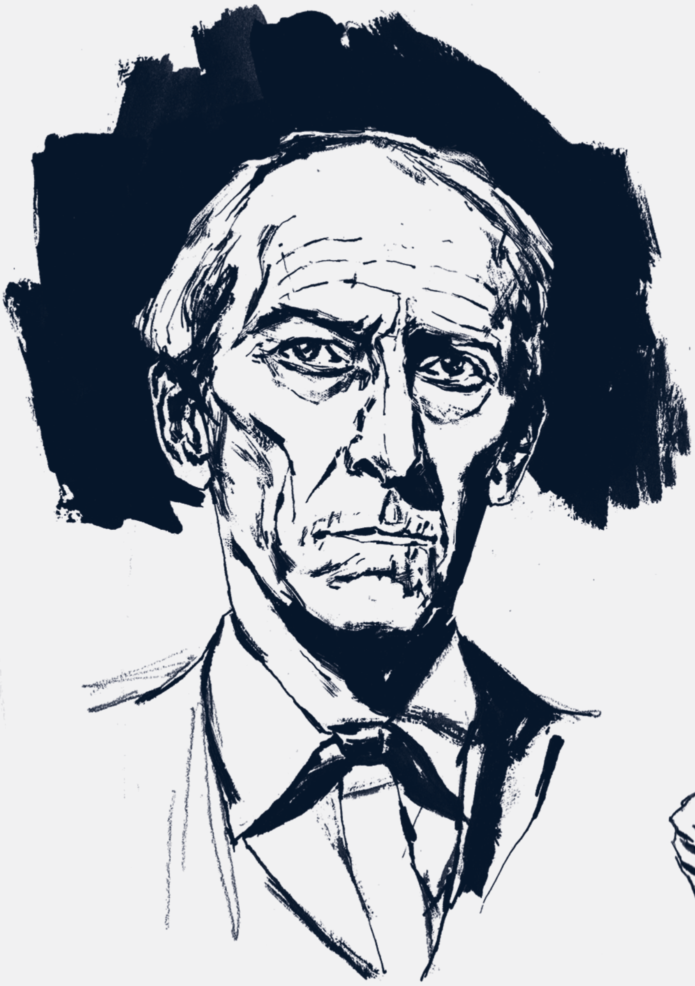
SKETCHBOOK

Notes by Scott Allie

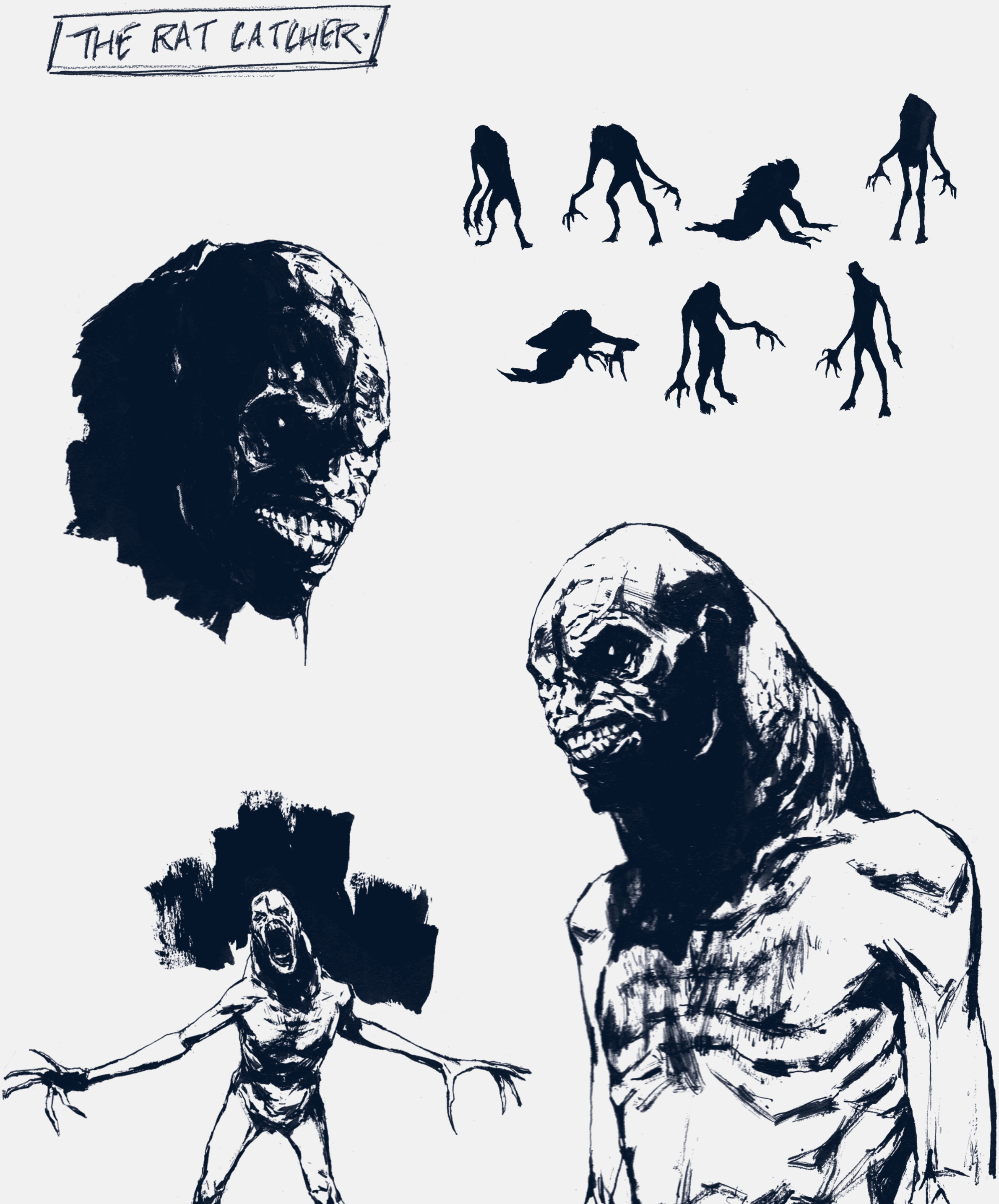
JOE GOLEM. - HUMAN

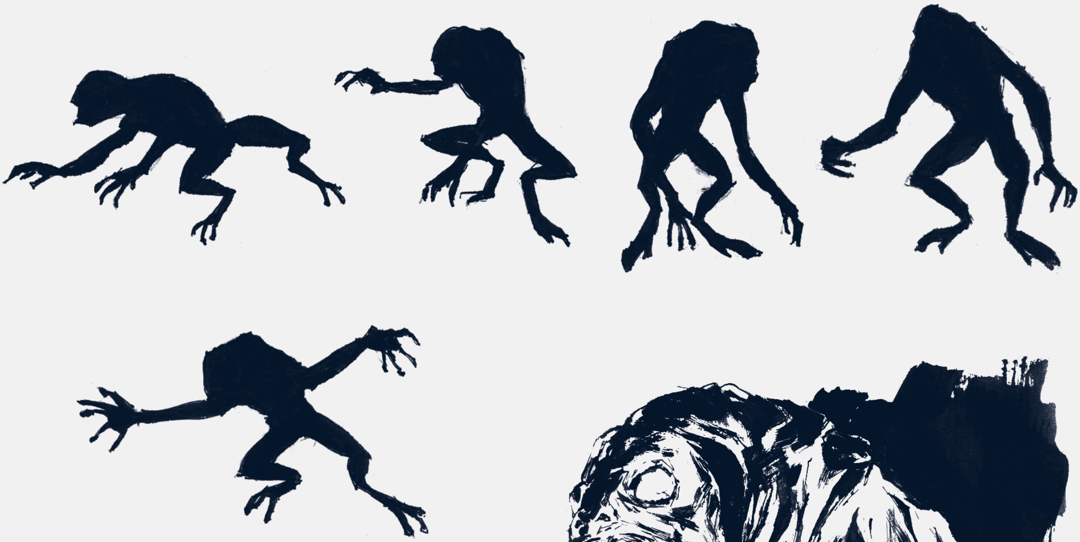
With many of the characters, Patric started with an actor, but had gotten away from that by the time he was inking actual pages. Clancy Brown provided a starting point for Joe.

SIMON CHURCH



In conversation Chris compared Simon Church to Peter Cushing, which informed the voice and body language of the final version of the character. Ben Stenbeck had already used a recognizable version of Cushing in Mignola's *Frankenstein Underground*.

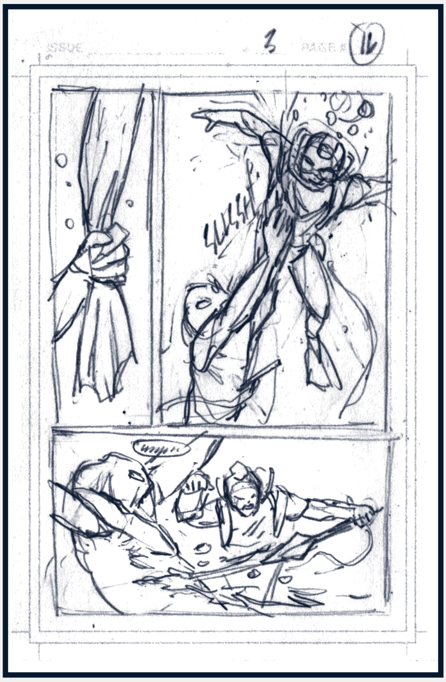

THE RAT CATCHER.

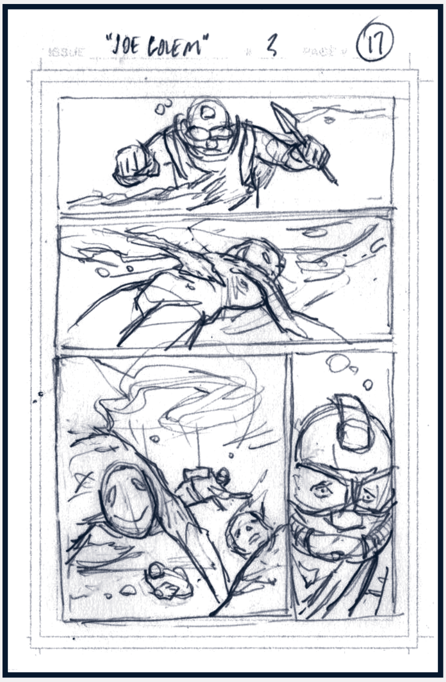


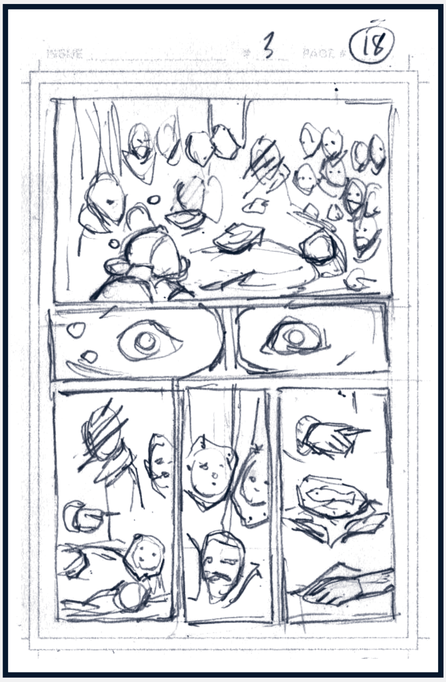
Patric's character designs often include small silhouettes, as can be seen in the sketchbook section for *The Complete Fire and Stone*. Distinguishing characters at that level is helpful with comics, which rely on instant recognition. It's why Alex Toth said Batman was the best superhero design.

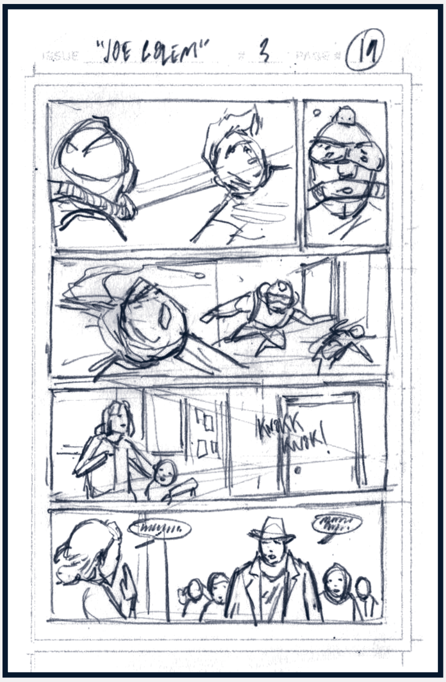
LORI.

PROTO GAS MEN.



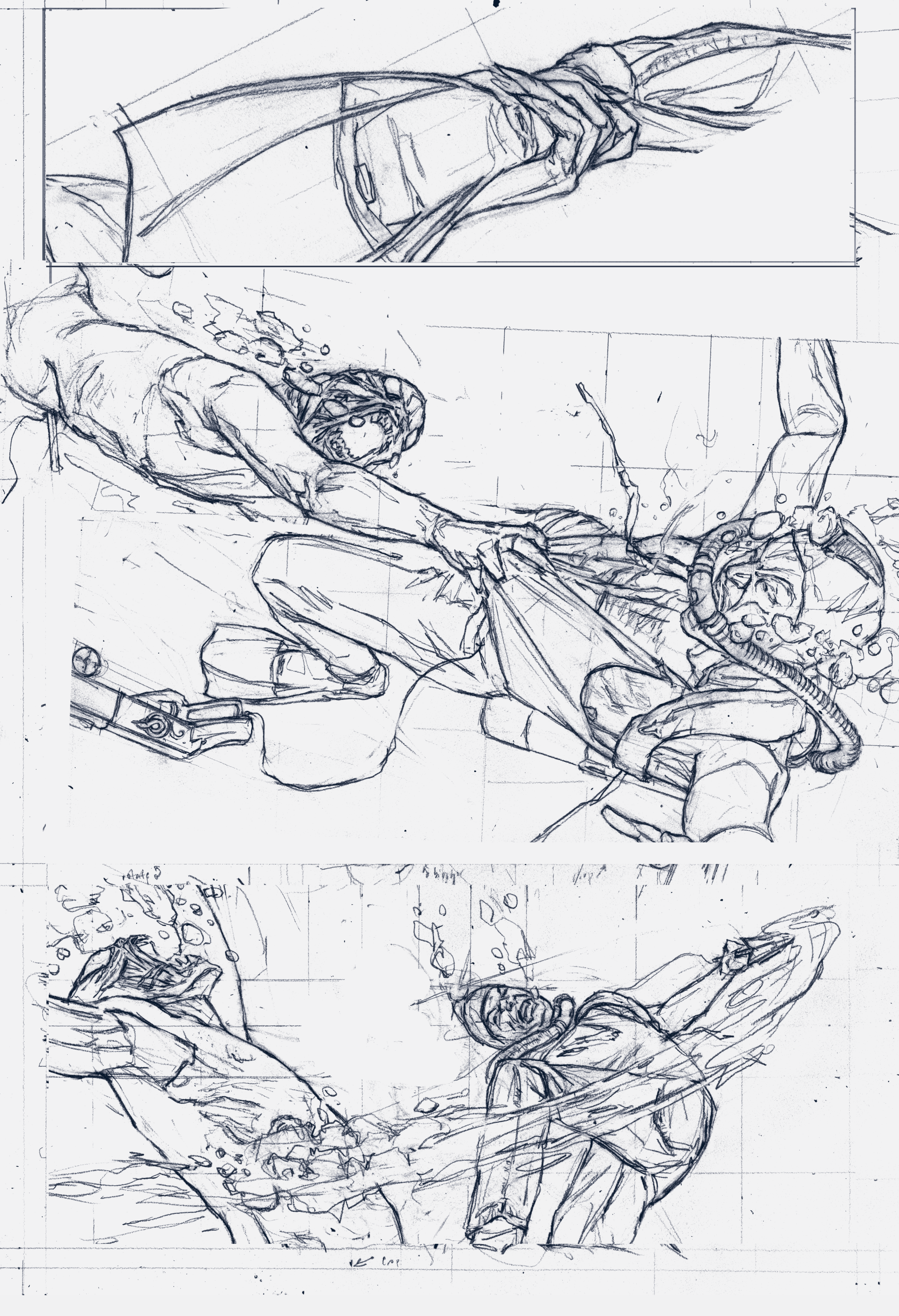






Layouts to pencils, where the most changes are made. Compare the top left layout to the pencils on the facing page, and the final on page 70 of this volume.

Second page following: Mike's variant cover to the first issue, colored by Dave Stewart.



M 2015

MIKE MIGNOLA's fascination with ghosts and monsters began at an early age; reading *Dracula* at age twelve introduced him to Victorian literature and folklore, from which he has never recovered. Starting in 1982 as a bad inker for Marvel Comics, he swiftly evolved into a not-so-bad artist. By the late 1980s, he had begun to develop his own unique graphic style, with mainstream projects like *Cosmic Odyssey* and *Batman: Gotham by Gaslight*. In 1994, he published the first *Hellboy* series through Dark Horse. There are over fifteen *Hellboy* graphic novels (with more on the way), several spinoff titles (*B.P.R.D.*, *Lobster Johnson*, *Abe Sapien*, and *Sir Edward Grey: Witchfinder*), prose books, animated films, and two live-action films starring Ron Perlman. Along the way he worked on Francis Ford Coppola's film *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1992), was a production designer for Disney's *Atlantis: The Lost Empire* (2001), and was the visual consultant to director Guillermo del Toro on *Blade II* (2002), *Hellboy* (2004), and *Hellboy II: The Golden Army* (2008). Mike's books have earned numerous awards and are published in a great many countries. Mike lives somewhere in Southern California with his wife, daughter, and cat.

CHRISTOPHER GOLDEN is the author of such novels as *Of Saints and Shadows*, *The Myth Hunters*, *The Boys Are Back in Town*, *Strangewood*, and *Tin Men*. He has also written books for teens and young adults, including *When Rose Wakes*, *Soulless*, *Poison Ink*, and *The Secret Journeys of Jack London*, coauthored with Tim Lebbon. His other work with Mike Mignola includes the novels *Baltimore; or, The Steadfast Tin Soldier and the Vampire* and *Joe Golem and the Drowning City*. Golden was born and raised in Massachusetts, where he still lives with his family. His original novels have been published in more than fourteen languages in countries around the world. Please visit him at ChristopherGolden.com.

PATRIC REYNOLDS left his former life as a former high-school teacher with a house, a pension, and a new Toyota to go live in the South and learn how to become a comic book artist. Since 2009, he has worked with Patton Oswalt, Joss Whedon, Mike Mignola, John Arcudi, Steve Niles, and Chris Roberson as comic book illustrator and cover artist. He now is an artist with a sofa unit, Medicaid, and a bus pass. He couldn't be happier.

"MIGNOLA AND GOLDEN HAVE CRAFTED A MASTERFUL STORY."

. . . . Comic Buzz

"OVERALL, THIS IS YET ANOTHER HOME RUN FOR MIKE MIGNOLA AND CHRISTOPHER GOLDEN—KNOCKING THE BALL OUT OF THE PARK YET AGAIN. PURE AND SIMPLE: *JOE GOLEM: OCCULT DETECTIVE* IS PULPY, SUPERNATURAL FUN AND A MUST READ FOR FANS OF MONSTER MYSTERIES." . . . . Big Comic Page

"MIKE MIGNOLA AND CHRISTOPHER GOLDEN HAVE MADE SUCCESSFUL CAREERS OUT OF [FINDING] THE HUMANITY IN MONSTERS; *JOE GOLEM*, FOR ALL INTENTS AND PURPOSES, MIGHT BE THE ZENITH OF THESE TWO CREATORS AT THEIR BEST. PATRIC [REYNOLDS'S] ART IS PACED BEAUTIFULLY [AND] NOT ONE LINE IS WASTED." . . . . . Comic Crusaders

"*JOE GOLEM: OCCULT DETECTIVE* IS A SOLID READ THAT CAN SIT TOE-TO-TOE WITH THE CLASSICS OF NOIR AND OLD PRIVATE EYE CLASSICS." . . . . Horror Talk